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LIFE WITHIN

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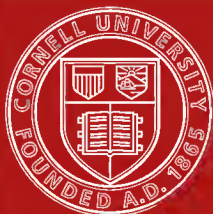
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THE
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*"I PROPHECY, with feet upon a
grave,
Of death cast out, and life devouring
death
As flame doth wheat and stubble with
a breath;
Of freedom, though all mankind were
one slave ;
Of truth, though all the world were
liars ; of love
That time nor hate can raze the
witness of."*

— Algernon Charles Swinburne.

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H A L L

Published in January, 1903

TO ONE WHO
WAS AS DEAD
AND IS ALIVE

PREFACE

***T**HIS book was written because I felt that I must add to a new faith my testimony of what I have seen and heard. I have doubtless made mistakes in the telling. I am not of the inspired. I can only write what has actually appeared to me.*

I am but a reporter of the workings of the wonders I have seen, and in that I may at least claim to be honest, making an appeal to other honest people.

Herein are facts. I have tried to put them in a setting not too far from the original, in a way which would appeal to many people.

The world is full of those who do not suffer themselves, and who do not realise what it means to try to keep from those who do, their only hope.

I desire only that this little tale may cause you to wonder if it is fair to allow your intolerance, of what is a mystery to you, to keep the sufferer to whom hope means so much, in the shadow of your disbelief.

T H E

L I F E W I T H I N

CHAPTER I.

THE snow lay deep in the street and higher still on the borders of the pavements before the houses.

Stevensburg had become a city. It had a mayor, a city council, and a line of "overhead" trolley-cars; but it had not reached the stage in its development where street-cleaners were thought necessary. All day long the delivery wagons creaked their way through the frozen and packed snow, and at night the shouts and bells of straw-ride merry-makers came through the windows, where people sat before their natural gas fires.

Stevensburg's oldest inhabitant declared that the climate had changed. At any rate, the belief in a new climate was just now coming upon the people, and inducing them to build houses in

which they could be comfortable. In the old days, an Eastern Kentuckian was apt to think that he lived in the South, and build his houses accordingly. Their wooden walls, brick foundations, bay-windows loosely fitted, let the icy blasts of winter sweep through the rooms, lifting the carpets in puffs from the floors.

In summer the inhabitants baked or stewed in the mists from the sun-heated river.

But the new generation coming along was changing the town's ways. An influx of Northerners, aggressive people who had heard of the great undeveloped wealth of Eastern Kentucky, had done something to educate, even while they were disliked and their presence resented. The new houses, going up all over the town, changing landmarks that had stood for two or three generations, making the homes of some of the "best people" look shabby, were of brick, fitted with tight doors and windows, and furnaces for the winter-time; surrounded by deep, shady, hip-roofed verandas against the summer's heat.

The hack from the railway station drew up to one of these new houses, but the orderly old elms and maples which surrounded it, lifting their bare, cold branches against the orange western sky, told that it was on the site of an old home of consequence. It was an example of the progressive ways which had lately come to

the townspeople; a lesson, taught them by the new people.

The horses, fat and sleek, too solid and comfortable to belong to the ramshackle old carriage and harness, tried to break through the drifts of frozen snow on the edge of the pavement, and then stood peacefully. The driver sat on the front seat and beat his arms and legs, and let his passenger get down as best she could.

She opened the door of the old carriage, tugging at the rusty catch, and when it gave bounded across the drift like a schoolgirl. She was so light and slender that she might have been any age, were it not for her hair, which was almost white under the brown pheasant turban. It was a sweet, delicate face, with perfect features and soft brown eyes, which looked up at the driver, pocketbook in hand, ready to pay him. It was the first time he had seen her with her veil up, since he had taken her up at the station when she left the car, and as he looked, his jaw dropped and he stared like a man who couldn't believe his own eyes.

"How much?" she asked again.

"My — my goodness — my!" the man stammered. His face grew red.

"You ain't —?" He evidently started on some question, and then concluded that he would

be foolish to ask it. He had lived in the town all his life, and knew every resident by sight.

Through his brain went a rapid rehearsal of how he would tell that he came pretty near thinking that another woman was Miss Cathie Beale "come alive." It would be a dramatic tale to tell the crowd about the livery-stable stove.

"A half a dollar, I guess — about," he said. His eyesight must be playing him tricks.

The lady handed it up, with an extra ten cents, and turned, just as the door of the house opened, and a tall girl of about sixteen rushed down the steps. The young girl stopped abruptly at the gate with something the same look on her face that the driver had shown. The lady smiled at her — but there was a moisture about her brown eyes and a tremble in her lips.

"Geraldine," she said, "don't you know me?"

For answer the girl gave a scream, darted toward her, and drew back, and then ran up the path again and burst open the front door.

"Mamma, mamma! Lily, Lily! Oh, mamma, Aunt Cathie is home, and she's *walking!*"

Then she threw herself on the stairs and burst out into excited sobs, while the rest of the family came to the door to see her who was as one dead alive again.

CHAPTER II.

BEFORE dark the story was all over the town. The driver whipped up his horses and started down Chester Street, telling everybody he met. It made no difference to him that he had never spoken to some of the people before. He stopped and shouted the news. All social barriers were down in the light of a general interest. Men on their way home to supper, some of them carrying beefsteaks in brown paper parcels in their elbows, after the old fashion of the town, stopped and listened. If they did not know Miss Cathie Beale, they knew the Judge and his family, by sight at any rate. And the story of Miss Cathie's sufferings was part of the town's history. She had been the beauty of the town, the gayest, most popular girl, not only in the State, but as far away as Pittsburg and Cincinnati. The year her father, the old Senator, died, she had lately made her début in Washington, and there had been rumours that she was to marry the son of an ambassador. Then — the stroke fell. Her father died, and

she came home. At his funeral, the horses ran away, Cathie was thrown under the wheels, and the carriage went over her spine. They took her home, and sent for the greatest specialists from New York and everywhere else. These came only to say that it was a hopeless hurt. Some of them waited about for days, in the thrall of that beautiful, pitiful, suffering face, wanting with all their hearts to give some word of hope, ready to exhaust the resources of human science for the relief of this poor girl. No expense was spared, no love was spared. But at last they all went away, shaking their heads.

The greatest doctor of all said: "If I could put a broken lily back on its stalk, I could cure her. For the time she lives, she will live like a flower in water. Her back is broken."

And weeping, trying to hide their tears, her family and friends began the loving task of keeping her alive. At first she turned her head to the wall and prayed for death. Pain, sleepless nights, the long agony of years lay before her.

She had one sister and one brother. As is often the case, the sister-in-law was nearer and dearer than the sister. Mrs. Glover was the older sister, and had her house full of children.

Roger Beale, the brother, had married Cathie's dearest girl friend, and the two women were of the sweet nature that knew none of the petty

jealousies which divide some friends when they share any love between them. So, when Cathie was carried back into the home of her girlhood, it was also her brother's home, and there for nineteen long years she lay, unable to turn herself in her bed. The baby Lily brought to her her first smile. The year-old baby had known her beautiful girl aunt as her gayest playmate, and in the weeks she was kept from the sickroom, the child did not forget her. When she saw the white face on the pillow, she gave a scream of delight, and said her first word:

“Mine! Mine!”

The other children, the boy and the girl, Jack and Geraldine, had come along, born after the accident, accepting the suffering aunt as they accepted any other fact in life, as something there from their creation.

A few months ago, in the spring, the judge decided to build a larger and more comfortable house. He talked the matter over with his sister and wife, and they decided that it must be done.

When the question of Cathie's comfort came up, she brought out an idea which had been maturing a long time. She wanted to go to the seashore.

While she was limp and paralysed in her lower limbs, and able to move only her arms and head, a reclining-chair with air cushions had been con-

structed for her, and she was rolled about the veranda, and sometimes along the shady walks of Chester Street. Sometimes for months this exertion would be too great for her feeble strength.

But as she lay in her bed the thought of the sea came to her. She was thirsty to taste the damp, salt air, longing to hear again the dash of the breakers as they rolled in and broke. She wanted to see the moon rise and make its silver pathway glimmer across the black water.

They took a cottage at Atlantic City, and a private car containing her own bed took her there.

Judge Beale had no hope, but an everlasting faith in new discoveries, new mechanical inventions. And here again he called together the greatest surgeons and physicians, and asked if genius had done anything in all these years to lighten the suffering of his sister. And then again they shook their heads. Water beds, air beds, oxygen in the atmosphere, the care of trained attendants, all these were part of the daily machinery which kept the poor plucked lily from death. There was nothing more. New doctors had come up in the years, and each of them had said the same word. They could not mend a broken spine.

"Even could we," one said, "could we force life into the nerves of those limbs which have been dead for nineteen years?"

After the summer was over, Cathie begged to stay a little longer.

"I love it here," she said, "and now that the house is finished, I want you to do something for me. The children have never had their mates about them for real frolics, because they must always think of jars and noise."

"My dear Cathie," said her cheerful sister-in-law. "You needn't put on that air. You know perfectly well that you have been the making of the children's manners." Mrs. Beale was as healthy as she was kind, and had kept her own mind sane by treating others sanely. No sickly complaints had even been allowed to enter the sweet room where Cathie bore her martyrdom. The invalid smiled now upon this tender, good sister and friend, in a way which spoke her appreciation.

"Yes, I know," she said. "But I want you to go back to the new house, and give Jerry a party where they can half tear the house down. Then I want you to give Jack and his friends something. Then if there is any house left, let Lily have her coming-out party. It has been put off long enough. She is twenty."

"But," said Lily, "how could I come out, unless you were there to see me in my dress?"

But it was after Cathie's plan that they arranged it. Reluctantly they went home, leaving Cathie with her nurses and old servants, and with a new friend she had made during the summer, — a woman whose gentle, motherlike face had drawn them all close to her. She lived near by, and promised to stay until they came back for Cathie.

The party for Lily was to be the next night. It was early December. And here, flying over frozen drifts, erect, with sparkling eyes, a pretty red in rounded cheeks, stood Cathie, waiting for them to greet her, while the story of the miracle of her cure was travelling into every house in the town.

By the time she had refused to "lie down," had kissed the hysterical Geraldine, and had greeted her brother, who came in and tried to ask her, "How?" and broke down into the first tears he had shed since that awful day when his sister was stricken, and let his voice lose itself in a husky whisper of "My little sister!" women were ringing neighbours' door-bells, and saying: "Miss Cathie Beale's at home, as well as she ever was." And the neighbours were receiving the news calmly, just as the excited teller

had received it, and had made one of two remarks: "It's wonderful what doctors can do nowadays," or, "I guess she wasn't as sick as she thought she was."

CHAPTER III.

THE account of her recovery which Catherine Beale had to give was received with puzzled unhappiness by her brother and sister.

It would probably have surprised the Beale family to be told that they were not religious people, always excepting Judge Beale. In old Episcopalian families it is generally expected that the head of it shall be a little lax in observances — at any rate until his later years.

The Beale children had all been “confirmed” as soon as they were old enough. “It is just as well to get it over,” Mrs. Beale had said. “In these days the very babes get such queer ideas in their poor little heads. If I let Jack wait until he thinks about it he will probably grow shy over it, and not be confirmed at all. And one never knows what excitable notions will get into a girl’s head.” The last remark was apropos of the mortification which a friend had experienced last winter, when her young daughter, still in school, had been “converted” by a Methodist

revivalist, and had joined that communion. So Jack had his face washed, and went to the confirmation class in the same spirit that he went to Sunday school, but with a little more respect in his heart. Mr. Lessing, the rector, was a mild, smooth man from Richmond, who was a general favourite. He made religion easy to everybody, including himself, and had that valuable faculty in a shepherd, the ability to coax his sheep. When his many parish duties and the long, hot summer days made it impossible to prepare a new sermon, he took from his library one that had been bound in leather by a devoted parishioner. The text was, "And she bound a scarlet thread in the window."

The congregation of St. Saviour's was made up chiefly of ladies, and "The Scarlet Thread" always caused a thrilling flutter to pass over the pews. It had several quotations from the poets, and some very fine descriptions. Mr. Lessing had written it in his youth, before he married Mrs. Lessing and became the father of seven children. He used to answer compliments upon that sermon by the modest remark that he was not equal to writing a sermon like that now. If there was any reserve in the eye which had belonged to a line of Virginia planters, his congregation never saw it.

Sunday school was for Jack a period of mascu-

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line education. It would probably have bewildered Mrs. Beale to discover that her young son was learning under the influence of an hour every Sunday morning a cynicism which belonged to the youth of the courts of the Louis.

Mrs. Allaire was a prettyish widow, who was considered by "all of the boys," including her own son, to be utterly incapable of telling the truth, and to be a gentle, amusing idiot. She laughed at everything, and was held by these children to whom she expounded the lessons to be entirely irresponsible; one to be regarded with affection and contempt. They told each other with chuckles, anecdotes of her silliness, and how the questions became confused when a disturbing element went by. When her head went a little to one side and her voice grèw a little sweeter, those of the row of clean little boys whose backs were turned to the aisle would bet their marbles and Sunday-school money on the identity of the passer-by. Some of them professed an ability to define the shades of consciousness between Mr. Lessing and Mr. Ainslee, the tenor in the choir.

The mothers of the boys held exactly the same opinion of her; but they would have been shocked and amazed could they have realised the clear ideas of the children. What difference could it make who taught infancy the legends concerning Lot's wife and Moses?

The brightest boys in the class, led by Jack Beale, had taken up a manner of reciting their lessons upon which Mrs. Allaire put the seal of high achievement, when she giggled louder than usual, and said, "You naughty boy!" with half-averted face.

Jack's histrionic representation of Jonah in his hut outside the wall of Nineveh, waiting for the city to be destroyed, and "jawing because it wasn't," was imitated for weeks afterward; and probably half the boys in the class grew up believing that Jonah was the original sayer of "I told you so."

The Beales were unaware that for generations they had regarded the Baptists and Methodists as very common people, given to the bad taste of emotions in public. They lived in accord with their dissenting neighbours because they were kindly and well-bred, but their deepest sympathies could never be with these ignorant ones.

And when Cathie had her story to tell, they listened uncomfortably.

Judge Beale would allow no questions asked until after supper. He looked at his sister, so pretty, so girlish, with the sweet look of maidenhood still in her face, brightened by a new expression which he judged to be the effect of her happiness in having recovered. He was afraid to speak of her illness. It seemed that

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her being there, sitting at the table, eating beef-steak and potatoes, must be a dream. There was no sign of the delicate appetite which had picked at airy delicacies all these years. Here was a healthy, smiling, cheerful woman. But the meal was not half over when the door was fairly burst open, and Mrs. Glover walked in with the air of taking charge of these unusual events.

She was a large woman, with an aggressive manner, and a high, cold voice, which had a good deal of use.

Cathie arose to meet her, with a slight flush on her round cheek.

Mrs. Glover kissed her, and then she said: "Well, Catherine, I always knew that you could be cured if you would only make an effort. When I think of all the years you spent in bed!" She stopped as though she could not express those multitudinous thoughts of nineteen years. And then she went on, "How did you come to get well?"

"My dear Harriet," the Judge said, "do let Cathie recover from her fatigue before you begin asking questions."

"Really, I am not at all fatigued. I am perfectly well. I am only too glad to tell you about it. It is very simple. I discovered that my disease was only lack of understanding. I found that the mind of God was really my life; that

mind could not be ill or hurt; that I was only an expression of that mind; and that I was simply held down by my own wrong belief. When I felt the life, the divine life, which is mine, I arose and walked, as the afflicted of old arose when the finger of God touched them and bade them rise."

She spoke with her customary gentle sweetness, but as she finished the whole atmosphere of the bright, warm room seemed to have changed. A chill of reserve had fallen upon it.

The children, Jack and Jerry, looked carefully away from each other, and their cheeks were red from a sort of embarrassment. They felt shame-faced at having "religious things" talked about in this every-day way.

Judge and Mrs. Beale gave each other rapid glances of dismay. Mrs. Glover stared for a second, and then she burst out:

"Catherine Beale, do you mean to tell me that you have lost your mind?" Her voice was high and angry.

"Yes, thank God," she said, reverently. "I have lost my poor mortal mind, and I have found the divine mind." And then she spoke, passionately:

"What more proof do you want? Did I not lie, a poor miserable creature, for nineteen years? Had any of you any hope for me, any more than

I had for myself? And *now*” — she threw out her arms — “am I not well and strong? What more proof do you want?”

The eldest daughter of the Judge, Lily, whose place in the home was something like what her aunt's had been at her age, arose and stepped to Catherine's side, and put her arm across her shoulder. Her eyes were shining, and she looked to those who loved her like a young, protecting goddess.

“Proofs! Proofs!” Mrs. Glover stormed. “I suppose you have fallen in with some of those scandalous impostors who call themselves Christian Scientists, people that the legislatures are making laws against at this moment. I suppose lying in bed for nineteen years has warped your judgment, but it's time you knew that *I* for one never believed you couldn't walk if you wanted to.”

“Aunt Harriet, you know better,” Lily cried. “You know that Aunt Cathie could not. Aren't you ashamed! I suppose when the blind man went home after the miracle his people said that he had been an impostor from his cradle.”

“The days of miracles are past!” Mrs. Glover said, triumphantly. “And I should like to know, Miss Lily, what Doctor Richards is going to say to your taking up Christian Science.” She

laughed disagreeably as she saw the colour deepen in her niece's cheeks.

"None of our friends will care to criticise anything we may 'take up,' I am sure," she began, haughtily, but her aunt put her lips to her hot cheek.

"My darling, I knew you would see. They will all see in time. Your aunt is angry, and is saying more than she means. Wait. Indignation does no good."

"I think you will discover whether they do, or not," Mrs. Glover said. "Stevensburg hasn't changed its ways. At least, Catherine, keep this folly to yourself."

Judge Beale went over to the fireplace, and looked for the poker, which wasn't there. He realised for the hundredth time what an escape-valve was denied him by the use of natural gas in his fireplace.

"My friends," he said, coolly, "I must say again that this is no time for discussions. I never believed in discussing religious matters in the home, and I am going to insist that it stop. We are all rejoiced at Catherine's wonderful, I may say miraculous, recovery. What nature or science or mental force has done, I do not know — nor do any of us particularly care." And then, by way of clearing the atmosphere, Judge Beale sent Jack for his cigar-box, and

Geraldine for a match, while he asked Lily for the *Evening Item*, then turned to his sister Harriet and asked after her husband's rheumatism.

Mrs. Glover could not resist saying: "Oh, he's trying that bath salt Annie Low Smith talked so much about. Another two dollars gone! I suppose he'll be trying Christian Science next."

"Dear me!" Mrs. Beale cried, "we are forgetting Jerry's orange soufflé! The poor child spent the whole afternoon making it. She will be heart-broken if we do not eat it." And with a bustle of changing plates, Mrs. Beale brought her husband and children and her two sisters-in-law back to the table, and a discussion of Geraldine's amateur efforts as a cook.

The question of Cathie's cure was tacitly dropped.

After dinner Cathie insisted upon going all over the house. Jack hung on to one arm and Jerry to the other. With the optimism of youth they accepted the fact of their aunt's cure much more easily than their elders. Judge Beale sat in the library with his elder sister, and parried her bitter questions concerning Cathie. He hadn't made up his mind, and he would not commit himself.

In his heart of hearts he believed that his sister Harriet was more than half right in thinking that

nature had probably been carrying on a cure for nineteen years, and when a strong mental impulse came, his sister was able to walk. He hadn't too much faith in doctors. None of us have at bottom, whatever our beliefs in other matters. But this sister antagonised him by her positive laying down of laws and rules. There was too much of the same blood and nerve in them. Judge Beale saw in full bloom in his sister Harriet those tendencies which it had been his lifelong effort to kill in himself. Back in their ancestry was a New England parson, who had lived in Salem in the days of the witch hanging, and who had gone to Virginia to carry the gospel to the godless on the James River. He was a handsome young man, and he married a vivacious Virginia girl who lived only long enough to bring one child into the world, and then perished in a boat on Chesapeake Bay, leaving her boy to be brought up in the easy ways of his mother's family. But the drop of iron was still in the Beale blood. In Mrs. Glover it had turned to intolerance, and her brother hated it, because he realised that he too held its possibilities.

Lily and her mother showed Cathie the house, with joy in a new possession.

At last they came back to Cathie's own room, the largest and handsomest in the whole house. The best pictures, the prettiest hangings, the

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finest outlook, were all here. It was as though the house had been built around the apartment of the invalid.

"Now, my dears," Cathie said, gaily, as she stood in the centre of the room, "we must change all this. All these pretty things go into the rest of the house. I don't need coddling any more."

"Oh, *no!*" Jerry cried. "Why, we took such fun in putting them here!"

"I don't see," said Jack, "why we should take things away from you because you are well again. *I'd* like to give you something more for being well."

His aunt's answer was a hug about his rather slouching, boy's shoulders.

Mrs. Beale, strong in her common sense, spoke at once. "Indeed, Cathie, I think you are right. The things were gathered in here because you could not get out to see them anywhere else."

"An' because," said Jerry, "when people came to see you we wanted 'em to know that there was nothing too good for you, and we took good care of you."

They all laughed, and checked themselves at the sound of a voice below. The two younger children looked at their sister teasingly, and Lily, with a hurried kiss on her aunt's cheek, ran away.

"That's Lil's new beau," Jack announced.

"It is Doctor Richards," Mrs. Beale said.

"He is really a charming young man. He has just come here from Lexington. He has been three years in one of the great hospitals in Vienna, and they have given him the hospital here. He brought letters to your brother. His uncle was a classmate of the Judge's at the University of Virginia. Very charming people, we understand." Mrs. Beale looked entirely satisfied and pleased as she made this explanation. "And then, too," Mrs. Beale added, "he is strictly old school. The Judge liked that. So many of the young men are taking up homœopathy, and you know none of us could stand that."

"Dear old girl," Cathie said, "you are all going to understand sometime that none of it is necessary."

Down-stairs, the tall, lean, good-looking young doctor was taking off his overcoat by the hall fire, and making himself ready to spend the evening. He had been to the country to perform a surgical operation, had hurried through his dinner, and into the invariable evening clothes which made him a little conspicuous among the young men in Stevensburg. He had heard nothing of the miraculous cure of Miss Catherine Beale, whom he had never seen. They had all told him of the invalid aunt, and he had hoped that he might see her upon her return. He had had, like all young enthusiasts, hope that this

might be his "great case." But more than anything he hoped that he might find some sure road to the heart of her niece. Richards was in love with Lily Beale, and he was almost anxious that his state of mind should be known. If she rejected him, the least he could do, a line of chivalrous ancestors had taught him, was to lay his devotion upon the shrine of the lady. There should be no mistake concerning his attitude. He was hers to take or leave according to her sovereign fancy.

He had even made a visit to the Judge in his office, and laid bare his prospects and his hopes.

"Do I understand," Judge Beale had asked, "that you are asking for my daughter's hand in marriage?"

"I am not, sir. I have had no intimation of any sort that I should dare to do so. I am asking your permission to discover if I may do so."

"Do you mean to tell me," Judge Beale had asked, gravely, "that if I told you I didn't like you, and would never accept you, you would go about your business?"

"I do not, sir," firmly.

"Then — why?" the judge drawled.

"Because if you have any objections to me you may know what I am about. I am going to take your daughter if I can — anyway."

There was a fine flush on the lean face for all

the cocky words. The young man was in the last stages of embarrassment, and the judge's gravity did not help him at all.

"Have you told her?"

"Certainly not, sir."

The Judge thought a little while, looking out of the window into Market-House Square, where the country people were driving up to the old-fashioned "general merchandise stores," where they did their trading, irrespective of the newer glitter of Chester Street.

"My boy," he said, "they say a father hates to give up his daughter to another man. That's not true. He wants his daughters to marry — if he is a decent man and has been a decent husband himself. A woman is happier married. A man wants good sons-in-law — men on whom he can rely. I like your family, and I like you. If Lily likes you — you will have my glad permission."

"Thank you, sir," Richards had said, and then shaking the Judge's hand and again, "Thank you, sir," had gone out, while the Judge looked after him with pleased eyes. He did not even tell his wife of this interview. He knew that women give impulsive confidences, and he feared the bloom being taken from Lily's love story. He also feared telling his wife of his own frankness. He was almost sure that she would say

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that he had held his daughter too "cheap." But the Judge not only knew his young man, but he knew the line he came from, — men of honour, of sincerity, of clean lives, and a sense of duty. That they were conservatives and hung by the old order was an added virtue in these days. The Judge knew himself to have impulses toward new ideas. He liked to hear what the advance guard thought, and giving himself the same premises, let his mind arrive at conclusions. It was a sort of mental gymnastics which he told himself did not really change him at all. Behind a row of law books on his office shelves were Darwin and Huxley and a volume or two by Ernst Haeckel. It was from them that he took his strong belief in heredity. It amused and pleased him to see Richards, who had lived in the scientific world in his student days, sifting out what he needed and casting away theories he could not demonstrate. "Safe," the Judge called him; and as the days went by, and he watched his daughter and her lover with keen eyes, he grew to love him. While Lily saw the devotion in his eyes, and felt it surrounding her always, setting her apart as the one woman to be first considered, there had never been a word or a look to cause her a moment of self-consciousness. Richards protected her sweet maidenhood and its gay irresponsibility, even from himself.

The rooms of the new house were handsome, and made a good setting for the good-looking young people. The rugs and some of the pictures had been purchased this summer. The Carolus Duran portrait of Catherine, painted the year she left school and her father took her to Paris, hung over the new Colonial mantelpiece. Duran had not painted so many American girls then, and he had seized this as a new type, and had idealised the very pretty girl who had come to him into a wonderful creature who had kept a crowd before her at the Salon, and had had a struggle not to stop permanently at the Luxembourg. The family said Cathie had grown into her famous beauty, living up to her portrait.

But on the other walls were an Eastman Johnson, bought by the Judge long ago, as a reminder of the days which were for ever gone, even then; a view of that hipped farmhouse in its cool greenery, which Mr. Henry P. Smith paints for walls like this; a Thames picture by Mr. Hopkinson Smith, with a willow, a boat, a spot of red and a spot of white, which made you think of a girl with a cushion behind her; and a Helleu etching of a sophisticated, slender woman with red hair. It was all frank and simple and fadless — this room.

The open piano, littered with the usual silver photograph-frames and bits of china, had a new,

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light opera score on the rack, and a vase of roses at the side. Richards had his face over the roses as Lily came in, only awaiting her acknowledgment of them as his gift, to complain of the short stem habits of the Stevensburg florist.

But her air of excitement gave him a look of inquiry. All the thrill of Aunt Cathie's resurrection came back to her as she thought of telling him the news.

"Aunt Cathie is home!" she said at once.

"Did you expect her? Who brought her?" he asked, astonished. Lily's face grew pale with emotion.

"Oh — She is — she came alone. She —" She looked up at him with tears in her eyes. "Oh —" Her voice broke, and there was a deep sob in her throat. A thing had happened that filled her with awe.

"My dear!" he said, under his breath — and neither of them noticed it.

"Can I do anything for her? Is she so much worse? How *could* she?"

"Oh" — Lily smiled through her tears. "It isn't that. She is *cured*! She is *well*! She *walks*! She walks as well as I. She is *well*!" She said it over and over in every fashion. The fact was so incredible, and he *must* be made to understand it.

"But," Richards said, "you told me she was incurable; that her spine was crushed."

"So it was."

"But you cannot mend a broken spine. Did Doctor White, and Professor Long, and all those great men that you tell me saw her, say that her spine was broken?"

"Yes."

"Did you hear them say so?" The professional man was talking now.

"No, but papa and mamma did. You know when Aunt Cathie was hurt I was a baby. The greatest doctors saw her then. It was this summer the great surgeons saw her again. They told papa that it was incurable. And now she is well — she is *cured!*"

"Who did it?"

The girl was embarrassed for a minute, and then she looked unfalteringly into his eyes.

"God," she said.

"Yes, I know. It is wonderful, isn't it?" He too had been brought up in the orthodox way, and respected and admired the beautiful faith of women. He would be a vestryman some day. But — he had spent a whole year once in Haeckel's laboratory. He had the belief that there was a Divine Creator, but he believed that he had set the eternal laws in motion, and then gone away and left his earth to work out its

own destiny. Going to church was like putting on evening dress for a call, — a necessary formality. He thought now that Lily's reverence of thought was beautiful. He loved her for it.

"What physician has been treating her?"

"None. It came to her. It is a miracle."

The young man knitted his well-arched brows. He felt vaguely disappointed. He had heard so much of this Aunt Cathie. She had been the town's famous patient. People had talked of her spirit, her beauty, the tradition of which was called up for comparison whenever a young girl of the town or a girl visitor was spoken of with admiration. They had always reminded each other, too, of her patience and sweet sanity, through all her great afflictions. And yet — evidently all her suffering had been hysteria.

He had brought a chair near the fire for her, and had seated himself opposite, bending forward in his interest. Now he leaned back.

"Do you mean," he asked, hesitatingly, "that she suddenly thought she could walk, and then she could? If that is true, it seems cruel that the doctors should have been so mistaken. To have kept her a prisoner all those awful years! And men like White — and the rest. What were they thinking of?" He arose in his agitation and went across the room, picking up a silver toy

from the piano, and giving it careful examination.

"I suppose they never had a photograph taken with X-rays?" he said, suddenly.

"No; father would not allow it. The spine was broken, that was plain. Doctor White told him that it would do Aunt Cathie no good. It would simply be for the doctors to see it."

"And yet, you see — how mistaken they were! There *was* no fracture of the spine. There was simply a bruise. She could have walked in a month after she was hurt." He threw his hands out. "It was cruel! It was cruel!"

"She could not," the girl said, indignantly. "Do you suppose Aunt Cathie did not *know* how she was suffering? Do you suppose she would have lain there — beautiful, sweet Aunt Cathie, with everything to live for — if she could have walked? Oh — you don't know her! It almost killed her. She only lived for us. She was helpless. She could not move. And then — the Light came. She told me. God made her understand that she was not chained to disease, that her body was simply a symbol. It was a miracle — like the miracles in the New Testament."

Richards stopped in front of her. His colour was high.

"I'm afraid I do not understand."

"She met a lady," Lily hurried on. "She had healed a great many people. She was a Christian Scientist —"

"St—" said Richards. To save his life he couldn't help it. The girl stopped, and rose up indignant.

"I beg your pardon," he said, humbly. "It hurts me to see you take up with delusions like that."

"It is no delusion. My aunt was ill, and now she is well. She never told the smallest untruth in her life. She knows."

"She cannot know," he said, patiently. "No patient can know. These quacks — these wicked fakirs, who play upon the delusions of weak women, have aroused her will-power. It is a good thing, whoever did it. Let her think so. But you — you know better. You *know* that the miracle is simple nonsense. If I smash that vase, no power on earth can make it whole again."

"That vase was made by man."

"If I cut my finger off, can a new finger grow?"

"Once," said Lily, "a soldier's ear was cut off, and the Saviour touched it, and it was whole."

Richards laughed, and then arose. "I think I should go and leave you with your aunt this evening. I heartily congratulate you all upon

her return to health; and I sincerely hope I may make her acquaintance before very long."

When the door closed after him, Lily went slowly up-stairs. For the first time she had gone to him for sympathy and had not found it.

CHAPTER IV.

HENRY RICHARDS left the Beale house with a heavier heart than he had ever known in his life. Sorrow had come to him, but it had been sorrow without bitterness, — the sorrow that comes from losing out of our lives those who have lived theirs. Work had been his solace, the builder not only of his character but his happiness, as it is for nine tenths of Americans.

But into these last months he had felt coming to him, growing into his very man's nature, the dearest thing that a man can know, — the desire to work for one woman.

Here was the flower of achievement. In and around this woman was the secret of every struggle that he had ever made. Like every lover he awoke to that fact as something entirely new in the philosophy of life. He was glad of everything he had ever done that was fine, and relentless with himself for every folly. Lily Beale satisfied every one of his ideals, he told himself. Her delicate, yet healthy, refined beauty, her

sweet gravity, her fine mind and kind heart, had been constant joys to him as they were discovered, and when he realised that all this met him with a quick sympathy, it seemed too good to be true. It was only because he hardly dared to ask so much as she had to give that he had hung so long upon the borders of offering himself to her. It was in these terms that he had thought of what he had to say. He did not think of asking her to marry him all at once. He wanted to tell her first the simple fact that he was hers, to do with as she willed. If she would accept him for any service, he was ready. This is what he told himself, but his hopes and dreams ran far ahead of this mild programme. Richards was of the strong fibre of a man meant to be the head of a family. He could never have had a great passion for a woman who had not the qualities which met and completed his own. His love for her was not less masculine because it was chivalrous.

Love grows from small beginnings, and generally puts out as a flower from a quite different root. Richards's love for Lily Beale had been the flower of his admiration. He had admired her more than any woman he had ever seen. Her common sense, her intuitions, he had pronounced infallible; and yet now, when they went counter

to his own ideas, he ceased to trust them — after the manner of his kind.

Richards was like the majority of men in desiring conventionality to the standards about her to be followed by his womankind, and all the charm of Lily's beauty had not saved him from a shock at what he called her present "eccentricity." Eccentric people are dangerous people in the scientifically trained mind. He told himself that he felt almost as though she had become insane over some subject.

He lingered in the shade of the deep veranda before the Beales's front door, and patted the head of Jack's St. Bernard puppy with a craving for some sort of sympathy in his trouble. He wondered once if Judge Beale were at home, and if he dared go back and ask for him; and then he squared his shoulders and went on down the path to the front gate. The clumsy young dog, knowing him as a family friend, would have followed him, but he gently pushed him inside and shut the gate, and walked down the icy street. He was tired. All the glow that had come from his successful work of the afternoon had faded away, and he was cold and out of sorts.

Half the night he sat before his office fire — as truly miserable as a man could be. Then he walked out Bronson Avenue and let himself into Mrs. Billings's boarding-house with his night-key.

Mrs. Billings's widowed daughter, Mrs. Allaire, was in her sitting-room making hot lemonade for the tenor and organiser of the choir at St. Saviour's, who had just come home from a rehearsal, and she called to Doctor Richards, as he went by the open door. Mrs. Allaire was past forty, but she was the type of woman who is careful of her reputation to the age of eighty — so careful generally that the censorious sometimes wonder if there are flaws in it, which might bring it to smash if carelessly handled. The tenor was a mild young man, tall and weedy, with the effeminacy and attempts at personal decoration which seem inseparable from the amateur musician. "In real life," as they say of professional people, he was a bookkeeper for a hardware store. Richards, kindly as he was, had a contempt for the man which he was not always able to conceal, and the fact that there was nothing tangible for him to hang the feeling upon, did not mitigate it. His corner of the table at dinner was always a centre of gossip and innuendo. He was supposed to have unusual opportunities to know what was going on in the town, as his choir was an amateur one. His comments were always flip-pant and from the lowest standpoint. It was with almost a frown of pain that Doctor Richards answered Mrs. Allaire's summons. He stood in the doorway, the narrow, dark hall

behind him, hat in hand, ready to go, after the courteous excuse which he considered due to all women.

"Doctor Richards, please come in," Mrs. Allaire said. "I want to ask you about mother. I do not want to alarm her, but I think that cough of hers needs something immediately. I am going to give her some of this lemonade. Had I better give her some quinine also?"

"I am afraid I cannot answer without seeing her."

"Well, come in for a moment." And perforce he came. The gas fire was grateful after the cold outside, and he stood a moment while Mrs. Allaire hovered over the lemonade. She was heating some water in a spirit kettle.

"We have been so astonished to hear of Miss Catherine Beale's recovery." Mrs. Allaire and Catherine Beale had gone to school together, and had been girl friends, but the widow would have felt that she were foolish in acknowledging that fact. She had a quaint idea that she was still a young girl, in the minds of men.

Doctor Richards made no reply. Holly Ainslee looked at the kettle with the air of not wishing to embarrass anybody.

"I *should* like to hear what a professional man thinks of those cases. Do you consider such a miracle possible?" Doctor Richards rather

liked Mrs. Allaire. She was pretty after a soft fashion, kind, and bearing with genuine sweetness the reverses of fortune which had left her and her mother with boarders as their only resource.

"I have never seen Miss Beale. You know I came here after she left the town. I have no idea what her case is."

"Professor Long said her spine was shattered."

"He should know." Richards smiled. He was very tired, and every question was a flick on the raw.

"But people whose spines have been shattered do not recover?"

"I never heard of one who did — before."

"Then," Mrs. Allaire asked, excitedly, "*do* you think it was a miracle?"

"I never saw a miracle."

Ainslee gave a weak laugh.

"Doctor Richards isn't going to say he believes in Christian Science. That would be unprofessional."

"May I see your mother now, Mrs. Allaire?" Doctor Richards asked, as though the other man had not spoken. Mrs. Allaire gave a hurried look at her lemonade, and went into a bedroom adjoining. When she came out she said her mother was sleeping, and she feared to disturb her, and she pressed some of her lemonade upon

the doctor. He plead fatigue, and went on upstairs to his bedroom.

Mrs. Allaire, a little flustered at his refusal, immediately began a coquettish ordering of Ainslee to follow him. These two played at a perpetual love-making, although Ainslee was fifteen years her junior.

"I wonder," she said, "if Doctor Richards thought it queer your being here so late?"

"I think he was more occupied in thinking about the Beales. Lucille Glover was at the rehearsal to-night. She didn't come until late. She didn't want to talk about the affair, and she tried to get Cale Blackburn to promise that he wouldn't put it in the paper to-morrow. But she did give her cousin Lily a fling. She said she had swallowed her aunt's story and believed that Christian Science had cured her."

Mrs. Allaire put her front teeth over her lower lip and shook her head gravely at that.

"That would be terrible for Doctor Richards."

Ainslee leaned forward confidentially. "Did you ever think that Lucille was a little — well, had a fancy for the doctor herself?"

Mrs. Allaire gave a little laugh, carefully modulated. "Men are a long time finding a thing out."

"She and Lily Beale look a good deal alike. For my part, I think Lucille is the handsomer."

A slight shade went over Mrs. Allaire's face. She did not entertain young men past midnight to hear a catalogue of the beauties of other women — and Ainslee saw it. "Not that either of them will ever set the river on fire. Theirs is the kind of good looks that fade. But it will be a good thing for Lucille if Lily and the doctor quarrel over this, won't it?"

"I have not noticed that Doctor Richards paid any particular attention to Lucille," Mrs. Allaire said, reluctantly. To save her life she could not allow to any woman a possible admiration. Every glance that a man gave in any direction but toward her she failed to see. And the most casual in her direction flooded her with self-consciousness. Ainslee realised that it was time to change the subject.

"I saw Bob Longmore to-day. He's off on another. I suppose," he added, with an air of cynical wit, "he thought he was keeping sober too long. Laura Shepperson might be waiting for him around some corner with Mr. Lessing."

"Mr. Longmore always seemed to be a misunderstood man, to me," Mrs. Allaire sighed, in her softest tones. "Poor fellow! His mother held him on such a tight rein. Tell me — of course a woman can never know in such a case — do you think Laura just the sort of woman to hold an intellectual man?"

She spoke as though Ainslee would be the final judge.

"When he's —" Ainslee threw out his hands and let his eyelids fall in a pantomimic representation of a drunken man. Mrs. Allaire laughed aloud. Her young son in a room beyond called out peremptorily and ordered her to come there.

"You must go," Mrs. Allaire said, flustered.

As Ainslee went by Richards's door he stopped for an instant and peered through the crack where it stood slightly ajar. Richards sat before the fire, looking at the gas-flames, his elbows on his knees. Ainslee disliked him because he did not quite dare go in and tell him what Lucille Glover had said.

CHAPTER V.

THE Shepperson family were among their rector's staunchest supporters, and one of the foundation-stones of the Episcopal church in Stevensburg. Their house was large, and from entertaining the bishop on his visits to giving room to any church committee which needed privacy, it was always open.

Not that Mr. Lessing needed support. Nature had made him of the fortunate type which is held firm by the even pressure of public opinion on every side. No storms shook him. He lived in an everlasting calm, at peace with all the world. If he owned any opinions not shared by you, you never discovered it, and besides the love of peace he had the soft answer. When dissensions came in the church, he preached, "And she bound a scarlet thread in the window" — which answered the purpose of "gilding the dome of the Invalides," in the time of Napoleon. It diverted the minds of his people.

Mrs. Shepperson had been brought up a Methodist, and she could never sufficiently express

her gratitude for having been socially elevated into an Episcopalian family. The fact that she had been very well off indeed, had palliated the offence of her family to the Sheppersons. As a matter of fact, her ancestry was one to be proud of. While the Sheppersons had been small slave-holding farmers, following the poor relations of the Washington family, who were sent out to the General's lands on the Ohio River a hundred miles above Stevensburg by the iron-handed Father of his Country, the Creightons had been pioneer followers of John and Charles Wesley, men to whom the light of the spirit made the cheap frivolities of life of no account. They were preachers and merchants, stern leaders of "class," and loud pray-ers to a God in whom they believed.

But to her dying day Mrs. Shepperson remembered the loud extempore prayers of her father with mortification. Her dying day had come a few years before, leaving a maiden sister to keep house for her husband and two daughters. Miss Emeline Creighton was a middle-aged maid who resented her lot.

The elder of the two girls, Laura Shepperson, had had an attack of fever in her girlhood which had kept her out of school for a year. When she returned, little Lily Beale, four years her junior, was in her class, and by the eternal law of pro-

pinquity, they became friends. People who were once Lily Beale's friends generally remained so, and one who had once had familiar entry into the happy Beale household valued the privilege. And then, too, the Beales were just a shade above the Sheppersons socially. Only those who have lived in a small city can realise that tie.

Laura Shepperson had grown up into a pretty girl, with a face which might have suggested a kitten to the thinking, with mental speculation as to the later developments. When she was still a schoolgirl, she became engaged. In the light way in which engagements are generally taken in East Kentucky, it was considered a very good match. Robert Longmore, the lover, was twenty-two, and already studying law in Judge Beale's office. His father had been a friend of Judge Beale's boyhood. He had gone away after his marriage to a girl of his own class, and rumours had come back of a spoiled and dissipated life. At thirty he was dead. His widow returned to Stevensburg, and went about among her old friends swathed in the deepest *crêpe*, for almost ten years. The first years she took her little boy by the hand; then he broke away from the gloom of his home and found a healthier life among his relatives. His mother was afraid to allow him out of her sight. When she had made some unusual demonstration

of this, her friends looked at each other — and recalled that the boy's father had died of delirium tremens. When he came home from a visit to a cousin, she would ask him anxiously if he had eaten any mince pie. She was afraid to mention liquor to him. It was as though the very calling of its name would bring up the monster which had wrecked her life. She told the boy that he had a weak stomach, and must be careful of what he ate and drank. He, remembering the green apple tree, the cucumbers in the garden, the dozens of indigestible things which were his daily food, never contradicted her. He did not drink, because he never saw his enemy. Any of their friends would as soon have given him dynamite. He went to Princeton, and developed into a brilliant, clever young man. When he was twenty-five and Laura was nineteen, they would be married. And then — at twenty-four the demon awoke. In another year Robert Longmore was an outcast among his friends. The wildest excesses — stories of which were barely whispered — succeeded periods of sanity and sobriety.

He felt his disgrace almost as keenly as his mother. His old friends, the boys and girls he had grown up with, were shunned. He would walk blocks to keep out of their way. When accident brought them together, only a chilly bow and a new paleness in the worried face showed

that he recognised them. The young men who had always known him followed him at first and tried to draw him out of the places where he drank. But he met them with wild shouts of laughter when he was drinking. At other times they did not dare approach him.

At the first sign of his drinking, the doors of the Shepperson house had been closed to him. Laura received a letter which was bitterer than she could understand. Then she put the diamond ring he had given her away. She did not send it back, because she was sure that some day, when she was older and could do as she pleased, she would "reform him." It was still fashionable in Stevensburg for young girls to marry men to reform them, or to consider it. It was always a romantic possibility.

Mrs. Longmore went back to the miseries of her early days, and saw the years go by, wrecking the youth of her son as her husband's had been wrecked. She never said one word. She was like one of those victims caught in a Greek tragedy. It was the inevitable. She had fought and wept once. Now she had no more tears. She was not particularly fond of Laura Shepperson. Sometimes she rather resented it that Laura was not marrying some one else. It was usual for Stevensburg girls to marry by twenty-four. Laura's spinsterhood was in some way an added

reproach to her boy. And she resented, too, the air of sharing her grief which Laura always assumed. Once, Mrs. Longmore had said to Mrs. Beale, who was one of her oldest friends, that she "believed Laura Shepperson would have married if she had ever had a good opportunity. Constancy is forced upon some people."

At any rate the spirits of the Shepperson family had no sense of being lowered by Bob Longmore's degradation.

The morning after Miss Beale's sensational arrival home, Miss Emeline came into the breakfast-room fairly quivering with the news. She had an open letter in her hand from Mrs. Glover.

She took a look at the breakfast-table, saw that Laura was not yet down, and went back into the hall and called her.

"Laura! Come down here. I've got some news for you!"

"What is it, Aunt Em?" Virginia asked from the breakfast-table. "I hope to goodness you haven't any news about that Bob Longmore."

"The only news about him that I am likely to give Laura, is the news that he's dead," Miss Emeline replied, grimly. She had put her letter down while she poured out the coffee. Her brother-in-law was deep in the New York newspaper, which came to him a day late, but which gave him a sense of keeping up with the news

of the world. Her niece made a dash for the letter, and interrupted by her aunt, succeeded in receiving a stream of hot coffee on the tips of her fingers.

"Oh, keep your old letter! It's from nobody except Mrs. Glover — about some mothers' meeting or charity trash. You can get up more excitement over nothing! I hope when I get to be old enough to have children, I'll have some, instead of fussing with —"

Mr. Shepperson's paper came down. "Virginia, if you cannot be more respectful to your aunt, leave the room."

"No, I won't leave the room. If I did, Aunt Em would have me right back, telling me to get through my breakfast, so the servants could have the table. Aunt Em's all right. She just needs a little stirring up now and then. She gets so she thinks 'a Y. M. C. A. oyster supper is a ball."

"I have nothing to do with the Y. M. C. A.," said Miss Emeline, with dignity.

"No, mothers' meetings are more in your line," grinned Virginia, as her sister came in, in a tumbled tea-gown, which had once been an ambitious copy of a French fashion plate.

"Listen to this," said Miss Emeline, taking up the letter and reading slowly and loudly.

“ ‘MY DEAR EMELINE:— I write to you at once to tell you of a family affair, relying upon your discretion. I know how intimate Laura and Lily Beale are, and consequently how garbled an account you may get of the matter.’ ”

“ *What* matter? ” from Virginia.

“ Will you hush, miss? ” And then going on, “ ‘ My sister Catherine has returned home, having realised at last that she was as well as anybody, and that only the foolish restrictions of my sister-in-law have kept her seemingly ill all these years.’ ”

Laura gave a gasp, and Mr. Shepperson put down his coffee-cup.

“ Does the woman mean that Cathie Beale is well? ” he asked.

“ Oh, impossible! ” Laura cried.

“ That’s what she seems to mean,” said Miss Emeline, “ but she certainly isn’t very clear.”

“ ‘ Unfortunately she has fallen in with some of those common people who call themselves Christian Scientists. And they have convinced her that they cured her.’ ”

“ Now, *isn’t* that ridiculous! ” Laura cried. “ She *can’t* be cured. I have heard of those cases before. The people get up, and say they are well, and then all at once they collapse.”

“ Well, I should like to see Cathie Beale walk

again. There wasn't a girl in this town could touch her for looks," said her father.

Laura gave him a quick look, and Miss Emeline's lips tightened. Aunt and nieces were as a solid wall between their father and possible matrimony. They saw an enemy in every unmarried woman under sixty. Miss Emeline had dropped all widows from her calling list. She read on.

" 'Lily seems to be as foolish as Catherine. We feel the notoriety which is almost sure to result if it becomes public, very keenly, and hope to keep it quite among ourselves. As Laura is so much older than Lily, she will, of course, influence her.' "

" Well," said Laura, " I don't know that I am so *much* older than Lily Beale! We were in the same classes at school! "

Virginia gave a cackle of laughter. " Five years, or about there. "

Laura, angry with herself for having shown her annoyance, said nothing.

" ' Please consider this letter confidential.

" ' Yours sincerely,

" ' HARRIET GLOVER.' "

" You seem to be doing the last," Mr. Shep-
person said, drily, but nobody noticed him.

" I am going right up and tell Mr. Lessing.

And, Laura, you ought to dress yourself and go right up there. They will need you to help about the party, anyway."

"I don't believe Lily would be silly enough to take up Christian Science. It will mortify them terribly. Of course they always have humoured their aunt, and they always will," Laura said, as she hastily drank her coffee, and started away.

"I don't know," said the astute Virginia. "It is one thing to humour a sick person, and another to humour a well one." Left alone with her father, she took some more jam, and went on half to herself. "Of course Mrs. Glover knew that the best way to get her opinion out was to tell it to Aunt Em. It will save her making a lot of visits to explain her point of view."

CHAPTER VI.

ALMOST everybody who was socially known in the little city awoke the next morning to remember that they were invited to Judge Beale's that evening to a "coming out party," given to Lily. Probably no entertainment ever given in the town was looked forward to with more eagerness. All day Miss Emeline Creighton had made little visits through the snowy streets and told confidentially of Mrs. Glover's letter to her; and the town had talked of little else.

In the nineteen years of Catherine Beale's martyrdom, many of these women had come to sit for brief moments in the sick-room. They had seen the white face on the pillows, worn with patient suffering. They had seen the sadness of the hollow eyes, and the woodenness of the poor limbs lying there under the coverlet, made beautiful by pitiful affection, and had gone away saying that they felt better for the sight of so much misery so meekly borne. Now, one and all marvelled that a woman had cared to lie in bed for nineteen years, with "nothing the matter."

One or two remembered how they had mentioned, when they had seen her out in her wheelchair at times, that she seemed strong. They had reading-clubs in Stevensburg, and they were keen after new ideas. "Hypnotism," "Subconsciousness," "Psychological phenomena," were all bandied about that day. When they dressed for the party, it was with a pleased sense of a novel entertainment to come. They wondered if Miss Cathie would relate her experiences. They had heard that Christian Scientists were always trying to make converts. And one and all wondered what effect it would all have upon Doctor Richards and his admiration for Lily. They had half expected that this party would be a gathering together of friends to hear the announcement of an engagement.

Judge Beale was not a man to invite question, and early in the morning he had taken refuge in his office, leaving the house to the decorators and caterer. Mrs. Beale felt for the first time in her life that she would not gladly welcome her friends. She wanted to accustom herself to the changed conditions, to school herself before the inevitable questions. Yet when she saw Cathie, her heart smote her. What could there be but rejoicing in her heart? It seemed almost as though Cathie's girlhood had been frozen up within her broken body, and was alive again,

unimpaired by the years. Except for her gray hair, she looked a girl, and it was with a girlish lightness and interest that she flew from one thing to another. Up on a step-ladder here, showing the florist how to swing garlands of fern vine from the chandeliers, and up-stairs in another moment arranging a grill to hide the musicians. Once she came whirling down the long hall where they were to dance, on the polished floor, a waltz popular in the long ago on her lips, her slippered feet keeping time to it. Mrs. Beale turned white.

"Oh, Cathie, if you should slip!"

"But I shall not," she said. "All that is over. I am as safe as a bird in the air of a spring morning." She took her substantial sister-in-law around the waist and tried to whirl her, too.

"I haven't danced for fifteen years."

"Neither have I," said Cathie, "but that is no reason why I shouldn't begin. Come, Jack, be my partner, and teach me all the new steps. I have a party dress. I bought one in Philadelphia."

When Mrs. Beale saw her in it, the tears came into her eyes. It was white, soft, silk muslin, simply made, a woman's, not a girl's gown, but it showed the sweet neck and round arms of the beautiful Catherine Beale of twenty years ago.

"Now, I believe you are well," her brother

said, fondly. She looked up at him, seriousness in her eyes.

"The way to help me keep well is to believe it with me."

The sight of the receiving party was the first shock to the arriving guests. Mrs. Beale, handsome, quiet, had her elder daughter on one side and Cathie on the other. They all knew her at once; but this woman in the Paris gown, with the poise of the great world, for all the sweetness of her eyes and the cordiality of her manner, was not a woman to meet with discussions or even inquiries. Here was no lecturer upon strange creeds. They moved away with a curious sense of being abashed.

Later, when they saw her dancing, first with her brother, the Judge, and then with various of Lily's friends, there was something a little unpleasant in the atmosphere.

Most of Catherine Beale's contemporaries were the mothers of families. Girls of the last generation married young in the comparatively new country of East Kentucky. Some of these women had daughters here. It was an unusual thing for them to go to dancing parties. They left that to the daughters. To-night they had intended to come for a little while, which meant until supper, and then they would go and leave the house to the dancers. Mrs. Beale had made the invi-

tations very general, as it was the first party they had given since Cathie's hurt.

It is hardly to be expected that women, thin and tired with the housekeeping cares and the mother cares, in a small city where servants are a constantly moving nuisance, should look with acute sympathy upon one who seemed to have slept through the years which they had found hard. They had pitied her, and contrasted her lot with theirs to their own advantage, for nineteen years; they had come here to-night to see an eccentricity, and they had found the Catherine Beale who had taken all the admiration in their youth. Her very gown seemed an offence. Those who had daughters had spent all their thought upon the adorning of the girls. Most of the married women wore the high-necked silk or black lace gowns which they called reception dresses.

"Well," said Mrs. Claiborne, who had come with the vague idea of "taking Miss Beale's part," "for my part I think staying in bed for twenty years is a clever idea. I almost wish I had done it."

"It certainly saves the complexion," said another.

Mrs. Allaire was waiting on the edge of the group, her eyes a little troubled and her teeth on her lip. "I hear," she said, "that they *skin* the

faces in the cities now. They put plasters all over the face and fairly tear the old complexion off. It is very painful, but it brings the new one out exactly like a child's. Miss Cathie's is certainly greatly improved from what it was before she went away."

"Do they do that by Christian Science, too?" A group of women had gathered under the stairs in the hall, and there was a general laugh at this.

"I do not know," said Mrs. Allaire, seriously. "I suppose they pretend Christian Science keeps it from hurting. It seems to me, I should have had my hair coloured while I was about it."

By supper-time it was in every corner of the rooms that Miss Catherine Beale had had her face skinned by the most approved methods, and that Christian Science had kept the process from being painful.

To Doctor Richards, the bits of sentences which came to his ears were like the buzzing of gnats. He was not a particularly patient man. He scorned these gossiping women, and yet in his heart he felt that they were right. He had never seen Cathie before, and he had been amazed at her sweet, healthy beauty. It was incredible that this woman had even lived in the house all those years. He put his hand on her waist, and led her through a waltz after he had watched her dancing indefatigably. The spine which felt so

firm and pliant under his fingers had never been broken, he would swear.

Doctor Richards was physician to the families of many of these wives and mothers who sat under the stairs in their best gowns. He knew that the lines in their faces had come from sleepless nights with teething babies, or of anxious bending over beds where croup or fever tore at their hearts, while it wasted their children. The arms which had lost the round grace which made Cathie Beale's arms so lovely, had swept floors and beaten eggs and stirred puddings. Backs not so straight and lissome as this one had bent over sewing-machines. His sympathies were with them, although he hated their belittling of their dignity.

Lucille Glover passed him after he left her aunt. Mr. Shepperson, looking almost lackadaisical, had brought Miss Beale an ice, and was fanning her in the most approved loverlike fashion of the early seventies, when he had last paid a lady any sentimental attentions. Miss Creighton sat under the stairs and glared at her brother-in-law. Mrs. Allaire smiled pleasantly. She and Miss Creighton had been open foes since Mrs. Shepperson's death.

"Cathie is quite a belle. It is the first time I have seen Mr. Shepperson seem to notice a lady particularly since your sister's death."

"He hasn't been thrown with any attractive women," said Miss Creighton. "Most of the women are married or old widows."

"Oh, Miss Emeline, you do yourself an injustice. *I* always thought you were a very attractive woman." Mrs. Allaire spoke with great kindness, and as though she were willing to stand by her opinion even in the face of a dissenting world, leaving her enemy speechless.

"Do you think Aunt Cathie really cured?" Lucille asked Doctor Richards, earnestly. Lucille was always earnest. She was much like Lily in appearance at first, but a second look showed her much more substantial and with the blue which made Lily's eyes suggest all sorts of flowery similes, dulled to a hazel gray. Lucille was one of the girls who "kept up her reading," as they said in Stevensburg. Since she had known Doctor Richards they had read a German book or two together in the summer before the Beales returned, but this amusement had fallen off since his devotion to Lily.

Doctor Richards felt that here was a woman who at any rate had the common sense to understand. He wondered if her sane mind would not influence Lily. "Yes, I consider her a very healthy woman," he said.

"You do not think there is any danger of a collapse?" Lucille asked, anxiously. "I have

heard that in these cases there is always a danger of their going back at any time, the false strength due to excitement giving out suddenly. Every time I have looked at Aunt Cathie this evening I have shuddered with dread. Do you think that colour in her cheeks quite natural?"

"Now if Mrs. Allaire had asked that —"

"You know what I mean. Isn't it due to an unhealthy excitement?"

"I should say," said Richards, deliberately, "that Miss Beale was no more excited than you are. She strikes me as an unusually well poised woman."

"Then there is no danger of her going back — to her old state?"

"I should say not. She seems determined to get all there is out of life for the rest of it."

"You think she is cured, then?"

"So far as one may judge casually."

"By Christian Science?"

"Probably."

"Oh —" Lucille breathed. Her eyes grew narrower as she looked at him. He must love Lily a great deal to take up this theory.

"I consider that these faith cures help a great many people. We know they do. They give an impetus."

"To a broken spine?"

"No," Richards said. And he and Lucille

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looked at each other with perfect understanding. Now when a man and woman do that, the woman always thinks too much of it, which is something it is difficult for a man to comprehend.

CHAPTER VII.

THE new house of the Beales had been built after a design made by a young architect who had had a year in Paris, and who found it difficult to keep the Little Trianon out of his work. His chief fault was ambition. As a consequence, Mrs. Beale found herself with a conservatory, where she had always contented herself with a "pit" for her flowers in winter. But they made it into a pleasant place. Stevensburg was in the transition state where new ideas — or even old ones for that matter — must have powerful endorsement from outside — even public opinion. Mrs. Beale's beautiful rag carpet on the floor of the conservatory was admired, and back-country weavers were at work making them for other people, because a photograph of two English royalties in their conservatory with a rag carpet on the floor, had lately been published.

The rag carpet was gay, and the geraniums, always vulgarly ready to please, were in bloom, and there were some wicker chairs there. It had

been a favourite resting-place for the dancers all evening. The young people had a pleased sense of being in the setting for a play or a scene in a novel, and had tried to behave accordingly. There were only two there when Lily and Doctor Richards came in, and they went off hastily to join the dancers who were flying about to the old-fashioned "My Queen" waltz which Miss Cathie had laughingly insisted should be played for old times' sake. Even they recognised that Richards probably had something to say to Lily.

He had, and he wasted little time in coming to the point. Her beauty, so delicate, so sweet, made her look like a woman to be moulded to a man's mind. Although the party had been given for her, she had been more or less obscured by her aunt. After she had received the guests by her mother's side, she had gone among the young people she knew and tried the old task of making the wall-flowers seem popular. There was some potency in her ways, for even Betty Lind, who always cried when she went home from a party, seemed to be having a good time.

That Lily was easily influenced, Richards was sure now, from her attitude toward her aunt. Last night he had been almost, he had told himself, ready to give her up. But to-night he realised that she carried his heart with her, and he determined to speak as though nothing had come

between them. He felt that it was nothing but a frivolous woman's affectations, — something that to his scientific mind was half insanity. He would marry Lily at once, for he was sure that she cared for him, and once under his influence she would see with his eyes. He would promise himself to completely nullify any influence of Miss Catherine Beale's. It was the masculine side of him which made him love Lily a little more, feel a little nearer to her, be fonder of himself, now that she had shown that there was a place where his guiding hand was necessary to her.

In Lily's consciousness there was nothing but the bright mist that hides all tangible things to a young girl who knows that she is loved by a man to whom she is ready to turn for the best that life has to give. If a girl chooses rightly, this is the happy time for her to marry. A little later facts begin to take form in that mist, and after awhile it disappears altogether.

But with the instinct of all women Lily tried to put off the inevitable which in her heart she was glad was so sure and certain. Naturally she spoke of the thing which had been in all their minds for twenty-four hours, and which no one had dared mention to her this evening, except as a matter of congratulation.

"Now," she said, "I am sure that you see that Aunt Cathie is well."

"Yes, I do," Richards said. "She is undoubtedly perfectly well. She dances like you."

"That is a compliment. Thank you."

"For her?"

"For myself. Do you know that Aunt Cathie was a great beauty and belle? Her fame went from Washington to St. Louis. We children were always told about it. They wanted to name a Mississippi steamboat after her, but grandfather objected. She refused a lord once, they say, although of course she never told anybody so. I can believe it."

"What became of the lord?" Richards asked. He knew she was talking against time, and he loved to see the colour come and go in her cheeks, and how she kept from looking him square in the eyes just now.

"I do not know. You have no idea what Aunt Cathie's recovery means to us. Of course we loved her dearly. She was a sort of saint. We couldn't really understand that she was the same as that Carolus Duran portrait of her in the parlour. The stories they told of Aunt Cathie all seemed to belong to the portrait, and not to her, up there helpless. And now, here she is, the sweet saint we have always known, and that beautiful girl, too. It is very wonderful." She drew a little sigh, and for the first time she looked at him.

"Now that your aunt is here, your mother and father can better spare you — perhaps —" Richards said. That was not at all what he had intended to say, but no honest man's proposal of marriage was ever a model for a hero.

"I hope not," she said.

"But I hope so, because I want you myself. Couldn't you, Lily? I love you, and I want the task of trying to make you happy. Let me, won't you?"

Lily opened her mouth to speak, when Geraldine came bounding into the conservatory in a state of agitation. Geraldine was at the age which takes everything very hard.

"Oh, Lily," she said, "Bob Longmore is here, and he is — he doesn't know what he is doing. Father is up-stairs playing whist. He is awfully —" She hung the last word in the air.

"Intoxicated" sounded affected to her ears, used to Jack's free speech, and "drunk" was a word tabooed in polite society. "They are dancing, and I think he means to go right in there. He asked where Laura Shepperson was, and when nobody told him he asked Betty Lind to dance, and she is crying up-stairs."

"I will go," Richards said. "Stay here."

"I must go and find Laura, this will hurt her terribly. And his poor mother!"

"Mrs. Longmore had just gone up-stairs to

put her things on to go home. She was talking to mother up there a minute ago," Jerry explained. "Isn't it terrible for a grown man to behave so! I'm afraid of him, Lily. Don't go out there. Drunken men are awfully dangerous. I always run when I see one on the street." Doctor Richards had gone, and Jerry clung to her sister.

"I am going to find Laura. Run up-stairs. It isn't a good thing to see."

"It's as good for me as it is for you."

"I am going because I have to go to Laura, Jerry. It makes me *sick*." A shudder went over her, and all the colour went out of her cheeks.

"Well, I think he was very impudent to come here, and I hope father tells him so."

"Yes, it was impudent, and I will try to see that he never does it again," said Mrs. Longmore behind her. She was shaking as with cold, although she had a heavy cloak over her shoulders, and a black lace scarf covered her head. The folds of black gave her the look of a figure of grief. She was not a strong woman, and the shocks of years had undermined her nervous system, until now, although she had started toward her son, she had not the strength to reach him. Her tortured imagination made pictures, pieced of former experiences, of what he might be doing in there. A gentleman with an exquisite manner

when he was sober, a very demon seemed to enter into him with drink. Usually he shut himself away from his friends at such times.

Laura Shepperson, her face expressing more mortification than anything else, came in quickly.

"Oh, Lily, Bob is here, and — I am so angry and mortified!" The words were pushed out. She did not see Mrs. Longmore. "I was standing there, after dancing, talking to Mr. Culvert, who is almost a stranger here, when he came along and took me by the arm and said — he said —" She could go no further, but burst into tears. "I don't see why his mother let him come in such a state. I shall never speak to him again."

The gay, high remarks of the intoxicated man could be heard, as he parried all attempts to lead him away. He was a powerful young man, with a strong, square face and broad shoulders, and nobody felt like making the row which they knew would surely result if anything more drastic than moral suasion were used. It was the first time he had ever made such an exhibition of himself, and there was a fearful joy in the faces of some of the people there, — particularly the "new" people, who had no ties of long association or relationship to tug and hurt at the sight of Bob Longmore's disgrace. Mr. Shepperson's face was white. It was by an effort that he re-

strained himself when he heard his daughter's name on the man's lips. Virginia, too young to quite understand the horror of it all, wondered why somebody didn't take the creature away. Miss Creighton was asking in an indignant tone how he came to be invited.

"I think," said Bob, "that Miss Shepperson and I have been engaged long enough without our engagement being announced." His voice, a heavy baritone, was hardly thick at all. "When I find her again, we shall make a formal announcement."

Doctor Richards came up to him and put his hand on his arm. Bob turned and shook his hand effusively. "Here is another engaged man," he said, cordially, at the top of his voice.

"Come away, Longmore. You'll be sorry tomorrow. I have something to tell you. Something of importance."

"Tell it here. These all friends." He waved his hand to the company. The dancers had stopped and everybody was listening.

"Now I hope, Richards, that you are not going to tell me that you have broken your engagement on account of Christian Science. You'll soon get that silly notion out of Lily's head. She's a sweet, pretty girl, too good for you — don't throw her over because she believes her cranky aunt — although it would be funny" — a grim smile dis-

torted his pale features — “to see the popular young doctor with a Christian Science wife. I suppose you would turn all the hysterical cases over to her, and she would say, ‘Take up thy bed and walk,’ eh?”

A figure that seemed to walk in a halo of light came through the conservatory door. It was Lily. Her fair hair around her white face was like an aureole, and her blue eyes seemed ablaze. None of them had ever realised before how tall she was, until they saw her walking toward the two men, her white gown trailing around her. She lifted her hand before Longmore and spoke.

“Robert Longmore, in the name of that *God* you blaspheme, get upon your knees and pray him to give you back the mind you have wilfully shadowed. It is his mind, not yours.”

Longmore, his pallid face set like a dead man’s, looked at her for one instant, and then as though his knees had given way he went to the floor, his face in his hands. For a space he rested there, while the girl stood above him, a look as of almighty pleading in her pure face. The crowd held its breath.

Then Bob Longmore looked up at her and stood upon his feet, his face a heavy crimson.

“Thank you, Lily,” he said. “Is my mother here? I came to take her home.”

CHAPTER VIII.

TOWARD morning Judge Beale lay for half an hour seemingly asleep, thinking over the expression that his wife had taken to bed with her. There had been a reserve in her usually kind eyes which he had never seen there before.

When his presence had been no longer necessary down-stairs the night before, he had gone up to the large room which he and his wife shared, and had gone to bed.

He was not only a wise, but a tender husband, and he intended that his wife should have her own good time in which to unburden her heart. That after all these years together there could be anything which she would hold back from him was beyond his comprehension. Mrs. Beale was blaming herself for her neglect of her daughter. She said, over and over, that there must be some defect in the child's breeding, to cause her to force herself before the public in that "unladylike" way. There is nothing so dreaded by the conventional mother as a deviation

from the paths of the usual girlhood's garden of dreams, in which the girl is expected to walk until her wedding-day.

So, all the rest of the night, Mrs. Beale, sad and sore of heart, lay with open eyes, her face turned from her husband, feeling unjustly, as she knew, that it was in some sense his fault that Lily had shown this new side of her character. The impetus to it had come from his family. Cathie, who had been her dearest friend, for whom in these years of helplessness she had come to have almost a maternal feeling, had brought an influence into her family which had made her daughter strange, and she was finding it hateful to her. She felt that Lily's "bad taste," as she called it in her own mind, was a direct reflection upon her training.

The light was creeping through the curtains when Judge Beale, who had slept the earlier part of his hours of rest, as the nerves of a strong man will allow him to sleep at most times when his body is weary, turned on his pillow, and took his wife's head upon his arm. They were still lovers, these two, after all their twenty years of married life. For almost the first time in those years his wife's tears wet Roger Beale's sleeve.

"My dear, my dear," he said, in tender solicitude, "why do you cry? There is nothing to cry about. You are nervous over the work and

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the excitement of the past two days. Rest to-day."

"Oh, Roger — Lily!" And she shook with stifled sobs.

Judge Beale would have laughed had he dared.

"St— st—" he said, instead. "There is nothing about Lily to worry you. She is young and impressionable. Her aunt's coming home excited her, and she was greatly stirred by Bob Longmore. Confound him!" The Judge's voice changed. "He'll make us all an abject apology, and I am not sure that I'll not give him a good kicking, beside. Nobody pays any attention to a drunken man's ravings. Almost everybody who was here last night is a friend to all of us. They all know what was the matter with Bob. I didn't hear him, but I understand from Geraldine that he tried to congratulate Richards upon his engagement to Lily."

"He isn't engaged to Lily."

"I'm not so sure of that. If he isn't, he will be. He asked my permission a good many weeks ago."

"And you never told me!"

"My dear, it was a confidence that I had no right to divulge even to you. I had asked your opinion of Richards before he came to me. I virtually had your consent to give with my own."

"I should have been told." There was a sense

of injury in Mrs. Beale which was ready to take offence everywhere, but her husband, sweeter and stronger of nature than most men, held her head against his arm until she felt her resentment dissolving in the sense of peace and security his nearness brought her. It melted her reserve, and haltingly she tried to tell him something of her feeling over the publicity of the exhibition Lily had made of her appeal to Bob Longmore.

"I was on the stairs coming down," Mrs. Beale said. "It was horrible — like something in a theatre. She made him get upon his knees — and — Oh, Roger, I was so mortified, I wanted to sink through the floor. *Lily!*"

"What did she make him get on his knees for?" asked the Judge. Nobody had dared tell him exactly what had happened.

"She told him to get on his knees and *pray!*" Mrs. Beale spoke with utter horror. "*Pray*, there in the ballroom, and she stood over him with her eyes rolled up. *Lily!*"

"It seemed to have sobered him," said the Judge, rather flippantly. "The only thing they told me was that Bob Longmore came after his mother, followed Laura Shepperson about, and said they had been engaged long enough, and greeted Richards as engaged to Lily; and that Lily with very proper spirit, as nobody else seemed to have any, called him to his senses,

and sent him home sober. Culvert told me about it; he said he never saw such a beauty in his life as Lily looked, — that she was fairly thrilling. I think you will find, my dear, that nothing so dreadful has happened. Lily is a girl of spirit, and Bob Longmore made her good and mad, and she gave him a shaking-up. He'll be around to apologise, and Richards will ask that the engagement may be announced. And everything will be as it was before. If Miss Lily has any theatrical tricks, it won't take Richards long to rid her of them. I know no man with more common sense."

"Nothing will ever be as it was before," Mrs. Beale said, and in that she showed her woman's intuition.

There was silence between them for a little while. The heavy cook went down the stairs, whispering loudly to the two maids as she passed their room, and presently the sound of biscuit being beaten on a block came up the stairs. All the sounds of a new and usual day restored to the mother of the family something of her accustomed morning attitude toward life. The troubles of the night are apt to evaporate with the morning in which we can look at them squarely.

"There is one thing I am profoundly grateful is different," Judge Beale said. "That is Cathie."

"Roger, do you think her recovery a miracle?"

"Everything we do not understand is a miracle to us, and we understand very little, comparatively speaking."

"Do you think" — it was hard to speak of things like this even to her husband — "that it was — supernatural?"

"Certainly not. There is nothing supernatural. Everything which happens is bound to follow some law. The trouble is that we sometimes do not know the law. There is a great deal in this universe that we haven't the capacity to understand. We are merely parasites on a little ball of ashes swinging around in space — and we have obtained the idea somewhere that we are the chief end of the universe. We have five poor defective senses, which enable us to keep hold of life, by fighting, and we try to explain everything by means of what they tell us. Cathie is cured. How, or when, is a matter of supreme indifference. She probably touched the button — by chance —" and the Judge gave a short laugh.

"What do you mean by 'touched the button?'" asked his practical wife. That her husband was giving her a theory of existence directly heretical to all the teachings of her lifetime she hardly noticed. She was vaguely relieved to see

that he had not taken up with Cathie's queerness, and that was all his attitude meant to her.

"There may be a means of making everything right — the crooked straight — if we only knew the law. Sometimes people stumble against it, without knowing it, and then they call it a miracle. There is no use in our trying to understand. We haven't the capacity. I'm going to sleep until breakfast-time." The Judge turned over.

"Roger," his wife said, "do you think it is a good thing for Cathie to be talking these new ideas of hers to the children?" She wouldn't speak of Christian Science. The very name sounded detestable to her.

"New ideas never hurt anybody," said the sleepy Judge. "When you get down to it, I can't see that her ideas are any different from what they get at Sunday school. They seem to be pure orthodoxy — primitive Christianity. I haven't been to Sunday school for a long time, but I believe they have some tales about raising the dead. Mrs. Allaire is Jack's teacher, isn't she?" The Judge's sense of humour was carrying him away.

"I don't like to hear you speak of sacred things in that way," Mrs. Beale said, reprovingly. It gave her no real sense of shock. It had been one of her earliest lessons that women must always be reproving their mankind for lightness

concerning sacred things. It was only really old men and clergymen who were not more or less given to it.

"I leave all that to you. Women should regulate the religion of a household. Most men keep theirs in the wife's name," and the Judge laughed again.

"I think," said Mrs. Beale, "I will get Mr. Lessing to see Cathie about this. We are taught that the age of miracles is past. And really it cannot be good taste for her to say that she was cured by those quacks. And I consider Lily too impressionable toward them."

But her mind was relieved about Lily. She was practically engaged to Doctor Richards, who was amply able to take care of his wife in every way. And Mr. Culvert, who came from cities, had seemed to see only her spirit and beauty the night before.

"I would ask Lessing up. Have him stay to dinner. And I'll get out some of that old whiskey Bingham sent me from Louisville."

Geraldine put her head in at the door after a light knock.

"Mamma, the man is here to take the palms. He has to decorate the church for old Mr. Grey's funeral at ten o'clock. I told Emily I thought you wanted to keep some of them for the conservatory."

“I shall be there in a moment,” Mrs. Beale said. “Don’t awaken your father.” She went toward the bathroom hastily, full of the cares of the day, against which spiritual experiences counted for nothing.

CHAPTER IX.

CALLING, by young men in Stevensburg, was generally confined to the evening hours. Sometimes on Sunday afternoons young men made visits; married men never did so under any circumstances, except upon other men. Stevensburg was in that state of progress in which there is supposed to be no possible attraction between men and women except the one which should rightly end in a legitimate prolongation of the race. Women met together to read and study, and were proud of their intellectuality, but any suggestion that a man and woman found pleasure in a close association that was not on the path to matrimony would have been received with incredulity.

The morning after the party, the neighbours of the Beales were interested at seeing Robert Longmore standing on the Judge's front door-step at ten o'clock. Judge Beale had gone to his office at nine.

It was with some embarrassment that Lily went down to see him. Although she had known him

all her life, he had been a young man at college when she was a little girl, and seemed to her to belong to an older generation.

He was standing by the mantelpiece in the library when she entered. Although the Beales had been for generations people of consequence in the world, who had known the social life of cities, Mrs. Beale was too long accustomed to the ways of the town to break over one of its social rules. Young girls received callers alone.

Mrs. Beale was disturbed when she heard who the visitor was. She felt sure that before he departed he would ask for her and apologise for the evening before, and she left the new plants she was displaying in the conservatory, and hastily went up-stairs to arrange her dress with a trifle more ceremony. With all her annoyance, she remembered that Bob Longmore was supposed to be critical of women's dress.

Lily came through the library door and closed it behind her. She looked very young in her cotton waist and short skirt, as she hesitated half-way across the room. Longmore had put his hat on the table, and thrown his overcoat open, and stood drawing his thick walking-gloves through nervous fingers. His square face was pale and serious, and there were heavy rings under his black eyes.

With ready courtesy he sprang forward and

brought a chair for Lily toward the gas fire. The library was a dark room, after the fashion of libraries, which seem arranged to give an idea of dusk and quiet, instead of light for the enjoyment of books.

Lily seated herself, and Longmore fell heavily on to a leather couch which ran at right angles to the fire. For a long minute neither said a word. When Longmore spoke, his voice had in it some of that embarrassment which Lily felt.

"What did you do to me last night?"

"I hardly know myself. Father says this morning that I recalled you to yourself." The girl spoke with the exquisite gentleness which was one of her charms.

"It was something more than that. I was *drunk*. Nobody knows quite what that means but me. I never before owned even to myself that I could get into a state like that. I only felt it. I had been drinking a little for days. I am always drinking a little. I was started on a way that once before has led to the great torment,—that shattering of the nerves that means—" His eyebrows were drawn together until they made a solid black bar across his forehead, giving a look of pain to his face. "I knew yesterday morning that I was on the way down, but I could no more pull up than a man in an avalanche can stop." He got up and walked

across the room once, and stopped in front of Lily as he came back.

"Nobody can know the horror of being in that grip. People blame me. They say I am breaking my mother's heart, and I know that I am. Do they suppose I want to?"

Lily looked at him mutely. It seemed to be given to this young girl to enter into this man's soul and see what was there. Words were not for him.

"Last night I came here, — a madman. I was worse than a brute, because I had human intelligence. If you had not saved me, by to-day I should have been — what I am afraid to think of. You did something to me. What was it? I found myself out there on my knees, in my right mind. All night I have waited for my demon to come back. It hasn't come. I feel like a free man. Since I was a boy I have been fighting that devil in me, — the devil that killed my father; and last night you drove it out. I am afraid of its return, and I ask you in God's name to tell me what you did."

"It was in God's name that it went," Lily said, reverently. "It is only God who can cast out devils."

A deeper frown went over Longmore's face. "I am not a religious man. I haven't been what the Methodists call 'converted.' I have seen too

many men 'reformed' by excitement. Don't tell me that I have nothing better than that."

"You have — if you will but keep it — the best thing there is." Lily's tones were full of the deepest earnestness. There was none of the hushed affectation of the usual talk about sacred things. She spoke as a physician might speak.

"Sit down and let me tell you. Let us counsel together." It was with relief that Longmore slipped again on to the lounge.

"I suppose you have heard that Aunt Catherine has been cured?"

"I had heard it, yes — But, Lily, let me tell you that I have no faith in such things."

"Yes, you have. If you had not had faith last night, if the real *you* inside had not felt that your mind was God's, and that if you would let it, the spiritual part of you would throw off the mortal cloud, you could not have gone away with the devil cast out. Can't you see? It was exactly like the old story. I was the instrument used for the moment to cast that mortal thing out. Wait a moment — " for Longmore started to speak. "Aunt Cathie told me how she had been cured. Oh, I had seen her. I lived with her all those terrible years when every hour was an hour of suffering. I had lifted her poor shrunk limbs that had no more life in them than this chair arm. When I saw her, strong and well, as I am,

do you suppose I could not *see* that it was some Life outside of us that had made her whole and strong again? The doctors could not do that. It was not difficult for me to see. I seemed to understand all at once, even before Aunt Cathie explained the wonderful thing to me, which she did that first night. God created us in his own image spiritually. We live because he lives, and we are the reflection of his mind. It is all — this universe is but his thought. How can we go wrong or be sick or sorry except as we get out of harmony with him? You know — they taught me at school that everything in nature, rocks even, is always vibrating. They exist in their present forms by vibrations. We originally vibrate to the harmony of God's thought. It is when we get away from it that we go wrong." Her face looked, as she went on, as it had looked the night before, almost like that of a prophetess inspired.

"I do not understand," the man said. "I was brought up to believe those old Bible stories. Of course I know them all, but they seem far away from us, and I have thought of them as I have thought of other childish fairy tales. That we were made of nothing was merely a figure of speech. I am afraid I cannot follow you. I had rather think that nature had given you some strong power of hypnotism, — do not misunder-

stand me," he said, as he saw the aversion on the young girl's face, — "some magnetism, some voice of authority, that could bring out the better side of me. I came here humbly this morning to beg you to try to save me from the return of my enemy, to help me to be strong enough to conquer it myself. Will you?" He had arisen again, and had come over and taken her hand, and she was looking into his face with all her pure, sweet soul in her eyes, while the man had almost an agony of pleading in his, when the door opened quickly, and Laura Shepperson stood for an instant there. "Oh, I *beg* your pardon," she said, icily, and was gone. Neither of them seemed to notice her.

"You have the strength of all the ages in your own mind. You carry the strength of Omnipotence with you," the girl said. "You cannot fail. It is only necessary that you should understand it. You shall. Do you remember how in one of those old stories there were three men who walked through a fiery furnace and came out unhurt? You have in you, in you, Robert Longmore, the same power. It is the mind of the very God who blew his breath into us."

The man drew a long breath and let her hand drop.

"Help me to keep it there."

"I will."

Emily, the second girl, had been knocking at the door, but neither of them heard her; now she pushed it open reluctantly, and ushered Doctor Richards into the room.

Richards looked at Longmore as though he did not see him, and went forward to speak to Lily, who greeted him pleasantly, and then turned to Longmore, as he took his hat and walked toward the door.

"Come again — when you like," she said.

"Thank you," and he was gone.

Then Lily turned a face to her lover that asked for tenderness. But Richards had felt the sweetness of his heart curdle a little in Longmore's presence. He would have flouted the idea that jealousy was possible to him. He would have carefully analysed that passion, and said that it was only possible toward one you did not trust. But his nerves hardened at the sight of the man who had publicly shown how powerful an influence Lily had had over him the night before. That his awakening had been due to anything else, Richards could not have understood.

"I am sorry to hear you asking that man to come here again," he said. He had thought of Lily as his own property, particularly since the night before. If her lips had not answered him, her eyes had, and he felt the possessive.

"I hope he will come many times. He came

to-day to ask for help. He has been suffering, and he has had relief. He cannot let it go away from him."

It may be forgiven Richards that something between a laugh and a groan came from him. Longmore was famous for a style of flirtation which has always been more or less common. Ill-natured people who were not particularly fond of Laura Shepperson had hinted that he had gone just a fraction too far on one of these amatory flights, and that he had discovered himself engaged before he quite understood his ground. They had also fixed his engagement as the date from which his later recklessness had started. The man who wants a good young girl, particularly a pretty and popular one, to "reform" him, is a type known and disliked of all honest men. Lily's ready acceptance of Bob Longmore in this rôle angered Richards, while it amused him.

"And you propose to try to keep him sober?"

Lily looked at him with something like astonishment.

"He must do that for himself, but I shall help him if I can."

"Pardon me — I know you will pardon me — but I do not think it well for you to do anything for Mr. Longmore. He is not the sort of young man for an associate for you. I should leave this for your father to say, but I hope I may

show my interest, too. A man who has led the life that Longmore has led of late years, has his sensibilities blunted. What he did last night proves this. If he wants a woman to help him, he has a fine mother, and I understand he is engaged to be married to Miss Shepperson. That is her task."

"She told me last night that she would never speak to him again."

"In that I commend her good sense. He can only make her utterly miserable. He is not fit to be the friend of any woman."

"He may not have been yesterday, but to-day he came to tell me that the devil had been cast out."

"That you had cast it out?" Richards had a smile on his face. He despised Longmore. He felt that his dislike could only be eased by doing him some personal injury. How dare he come here and try to keep the hold that he had gained on an impressionable girl by being suddenly shocked into soberness by her indignation? And yet he felt that he must treat the matter lightly to Lily.

"I felt myself to be the instrument of God to cast it out," she said, solemnly. "It came to me like an inspiration. It was God speaking to me. I knew that it could be done. I had seen my aunt. She had told me how one who

knew and understood the divine harmony had shown her that she was only held to decay because she would not let God's thoughts recreate her. I knew that God could push aside that shadow on his poor brain. It seemed terrible to me that he should be that pitiful thing he was. The blackness passed away, as I knew it would, and he was himself."

Richards arose and walked across the floor in the same path that Longmore had taken.

"This is madness," he said. "It is almost — It is something that you should push out of your mind. My child, your aunt is simply — was simply a victim of hysteria. Hysteria is one of the most remarkable states. It can simulate almost any disease. Your aunt had a painful accident at a time when her mind was unusually depressed on account of grief. She thought she had a broken spine, and she lay there for all those years with practically a broken spine. If I let my right hand hang loose and imagine I have no use of it, to all practical purposes I have not. Just so was it in the case of your aunt. The change of scene last summer and new influences helped her. She began to *want* to get well. Some pleasant-mannered, shrewd woman who had her living to earn by her wits came along and 'cured' her by telling her she was well — and presto — a miracle!" He stopped. "Come to your sweet

senses. That is all there was to it." He smiled winningly. "Your aunt is doubtless honest in her beliefs. Leave them to her. It would not be kind to tell her that she almost wilfully wasted nineteen years of her life. But we understand."

"It will be my earnest wish to make you understand," Lily said, but Richards went on. It seemed to him impossible that she could not see.

"As for Longmore, he was intoxicated — just enough to be foolish. You frightened and shocked him into sobriety. He is a scoundrel and a cad to come here and try to take a mean advantage of it. It shows how far a man may depart from the code of honour in which he has been reared. Lily, I want you to give me the right as one nearer than your father, to call him to account for it. Let us forget everything else, my dear, except that we love each other. You do love me?" He looked into her eyes with all the indignation out of his, and only the expression of the wooer. The faults which she seemed to show were making her more human, bringing her closer to him. He felt more confidence than ever.

"I do love you — No," for he had put out his arms to her, his face showing relief in its tenderness, "but I should think myself lacking in my duty to the Spirit that I have come to understand if I put it aside selfishly."

"Lily, Lily," the man said, in real anxiety, "this is madness! My dear, my child, my darling, you must let me take you away from all such thoughts."

"I cannot."

"But, suppose for an instant that there *was* some truth in them. Suppose there is some occult force we do not understand that can perform miracles. Why would you let it stand between us? We are young, we are human, we love each other. Isn't that enough? Let these strange ideas go. For *my* sake!"

"Do you suppose," said Lily, "that if all the world were blind, and one man were suddenly given sight, and knew that he could give it to those he loved if they would only let him, that he would consent to listen when they wished to blind him again?"

After Richards had gone and Lily had started up to her own room, she met her mother.

"Laura Shepperson was here. I told her Bob Longmore had come to apologise. He did, I suppose."

"No, I think not," Lily said.

"And Doctor Richards —" Mrs. Beale hesitated. "Your father thought he would probably be here to dinner."

"No, I think not," Lily said.

CHAPTER X.

TO imagine that a knowledge of the scene at the party at Judge Beale's house was kept within the circle of the family's friends and acquaintances who had witnessed it, would be to reckon with no understanding of a town of the size of Stevensburg. Judge Beale had comforted his wife with the assurance that it was confined to their friends, but neither of them quite believed it.

Mothers who had not gone to the party were awakened that night and told of it; servants heard it at breakfast-tables; and by the time Longmore and Richards had made their visits it was the sweet morsel of gossip under the tongues of every woman who cared for gossip in the town. The Beale house had taken on almost the air of a public institution. The expressman delivering a package in the neighbourhood turned and looked at it all around the corner. The musicians who had been there had carried the story home. At first they said that Miss Beale had slapped Mr. Longmore in the face and that in his

state of intoxication he had fallen on the floor, and that theory continued to be held for some time, in the "Over-the-Tracks" district. It was not until late in the day that anybody seemed to realise that Lily supposed herself to have recalled Bob Longmore to his senses through any other agency than indignation. It was Laura Shepperson who told them. When she left the door of the library she went hastily up to Lily's room. She found Cathie Beale there carefully folding Lily's pretty white gown of the evening before, packing the bodice with tissue paper and pulling out the frills as though she had been doing the same thing for years. After the night of dancing her colour was as bright and serene and her movements as quick as when she arrived.

Laura threw herself into the chintz-cushioned wicker chair by the window. She was pale, and her eyes were angry. The sun was coming out to-day with one of those vagaries of climate for which this part of the country is noted, and the snow and ice were turning to slush in the streets. The bracing air was gone, and a vapour from the melting snow seemed to fill the lungs and depress the heart. Laura had left home and come to Lily to talk over her own affairs, to ask for counsel and sympathy, in a quarter where she had always been sure of finding it. She had wanted to tell Lily of the cutting remarks of her aunt and

sister, and their "I told you so's" concerning Bob Longmore's revelations; of her father's peremptory command, that she never speak to Longmore again, and that she should tell him that he was discarded. Also, she had wanted a long discussion upon the possible effect of such a course upon Bob. She had made up her words to say to Lily. She liked to think that her sentiments were both high-minded and dramatic. She had in her pocket a letter that she had spent the early morning hours in composing. It was a final renunciation, and she thought that it compared favourably as a piece of literature with any similar document. In it she had begged Longmore to consider that it was by his own act that they were parted, and that if he would try to conquer his awful inheritance he could yet lead a noble and useful life, though he must see that the public insult of the night before had put it out of her power ever to be anything to him. She was not at all sure that she intended sending this letter. She had not stamped it, but it had given her great pleasure to write it.

She had intended to have an enjoyable morning recalling to Lily that Longmore had publicly given out her own engagement to Doctor Richards, and to ask how it was to be followed up. The thing could not be left as it was now. She

was curious, too, to hear if any engagement existed.

But the whole situation had changed when she saw Longmore and Lily standing there seemingly absorbed in each other. She took a seat where she could look at the front gate, and see Longmore's departure.

"You look well after your dissipations of last night, Miss Cathie," she said, almost insolently. "I could hardly believe that it was you, when I remembered how you have always been. It seemed like a stranger."

"That poor mind-sick creature seems like a stranger to me now," Cathie said. "I pity her more than I can say, for the mistakes that kept her there all those years." She lifted a heavy box, and began packing Lily's finery away.

Laura looked at her curiously. She had had no opportunity to more than greet Cathie the day before, and, while her own affairs were uppermost in her mind, she could not resist trying to hear what Cathie would say. She felt that the safest plan would be to pretend that she had heard no story of her cure.

"Did Professor Long cure you at his hospital in Philadelphia?"

"No. I had a disease which they could not cure. It was merely a belief that I was ill. I

am in reality God's likeness, my dear. When I discovered that, I was well."

"Do you think, then, Miss Cathie, that you could have walked at any time? That it was just imagination? Surely not."

"I certainly could not have walked by myself alone in the state in which I was. I needed to put my mind in harmony with the Great Mind, before I could know that I was perfectly well. I could not have walked while I believed that my body was broken. Certainly not." She looked at Laura with tenderness. To Cathie there had come a sweet solicitude toward all humanity. Her heart went out in a great love and a desire to help. Particularly was this feeling aroused by young womanhood. In this, Lily's friend, she felt that she must find one who understood her, and the story of her recovery was one she loved to tell.

"I had a dear friend — she was not a dear friend at first, but she grew to be — who had been as I was, an invalid for years. She had what the doctors call consumption, and year after year she went up and down the earth trying to find comparative comfort for the few years she had to live. Italy, California, the Adirondacks, had all been tried, and day by day the spirit was leaving her just a poor miserable dead thing. That was years ago. She happened to be in the same town once with a wonderful woman, the Mother, to whom

the understanding that rightly we are all ideas of God's mind, was first given. This wonderful woman came to see her, and in ten days she was well."

There was a rap given by a strong and decided hand upon the door, and Miss Cathie opened it to let Lucille Glover in. In Stevensburg they still kept up the old Southern habit of seeking the family in whatever part of the house they happened to be.

"Lily isn't here?" she said, looking around. "What a pretty dress that was, — but *did* you think it fitted in the back? I thought it was cut a little low for Lily's shoulder-blades."

"The bones of extreme youth are pretty," Miss Cathie said, innocently. The girls exchanged glances. They were Lily's seniors, and resented it a little with that curious feeling of beginning to be *passé* which is the heritage which falls upon a Southern girl who has passed her twenty-third birthday unmarried. They each considered that Cathie had intended to say something unpleasant. But there was no exchange of sympathy between these two. Laura had heard once through Mrs. Allaire's kind offices that Lucille had wondered how Laura ever expected to hold as clever a man as Robert Longmore — when he was sober. Mrs. Allaire had builded that remark out of Lucille's casual mention of Longmore's fine mind, and the

possibility of his being reformed by a strong-minded woman. Lucille was too clever for idle spite, — that rage of the impotent. To this first flight Mrs. Allaire had later added that Lucille thought Laura had better take him in his then state. It had made a coolness between the girls which temperament assisted.

“What a pretty room Lily has here,” Lucille said, looking about. “Isn’t that one of Grandmother Beale’s old four-poster bedsteads? And where did she get that embroidered valance?”

“My great-grandmother Temple embroidered that, at school, in England,” Cathie said, proudly. “Your great-great-grandmother, my dear.”

“Precious little good it does me to have had a great-great-grandmother who did embroidery,” Lucille said, good-naturedly. “I didn’t even inherit the talent for doing it. Some of these days, Aunt Cathie, I am going to come here with a search-warrant and take the great-great part of the heirlooms. Isn’t that the baby portrait of Granny by Sully that used to hang over your bed? Well, upon my word, Lil has taken the cream of things!”

“It looks exactly as she did when she was a baby, and as it isn’t fair that I should continue to have all the pretty things in the house now that I am well, I gave it to her.”

“Your aunt has been telling me about her re-

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covery," Laura said. She went over to the chintz window-seat, sat down by Lucille, and half put her arm around her in the affectionate habit of girls. Longmore had gone.

"Please go on, Miss Cathie. I know Lucille has heard all about it, but it is so wonderful I am sure she will be glad to hear it again." There was the sweetest sincerity in her tones.

Cathie had been sheltered and petted through the years when a woman is gaining worldly experience. She looked at these two girls with glad eyes. They seemed so young and happy and so impressionable. They were Lily's friends, and Lily had understood from the first moment. Doubtless they, too, with their clear eyes and smiling mouths, had the hearts of little children, unspoiled by prejudices.

"I had just told Laura of my friend Mrs. Mason, who was cured by the discoverer of the power to cure. She came to see me at Atlantic City, and taught me that my illness was unnecessary, and that I had only to allow the real Life to enter into me to be well."

"Aunt Cathie," said Lucille, in a judicial tone, "do you believe that your back was actually broken?"

"According to the physicians it was."

"But do *you* believe it was? Do you believe

that the bones of your spine were shattered as Professor Long and the rest of them said?"

"Accidents are unknown to the Immortal Mind. The real *me* — the woman — was uninjured; and when I was able to realise that, and that my body was in reality but the reflection of my mind, then my spine was no longer even what you call 'broken' — not even what Professor Long calls 'broken.' When I was able to eradicate the image of disease and hurt, I was well."

"When, in other words, you believed that you could walk, you could."

"Yes. When I knew that I was really well, I could walk."

"Do you remember Lawrence Billings, Mrs. Allaire's brother, Aunt Cathie? He was hurt in the mountains last year by his gun going off. He didn't know he was hurt, and he started to walk and fell down helpless. Now, he *thought* he could walk, but he couldn't. Now, if your theory is correct, why couldn't he?"

"He had no understanding of the Divine Immortal Mind that is the real life and support of man. Had he had, he would not have been hurt."

"Had any one who understood that his body was simply the reflection of mind been there to realise this for him, there wouldn't have been any bullet-hole?"

"If he had understood truly that he was simply part of the manifestation of Immortal Creative Mind, and that that could not be injured, there would have been no mark. Are there not records of lepers being cured, of their being made whole even after the ravages of that awful disease?"

"But the days of miracles are over. If I could see something like that, I might be easier to convince."

"But you saw something as wonderful only last night." Cathie's eyes glowed.

"What?" the two girls asked together.

"What Lily did for Robert Longmore last night." Cathie did not notice that Laura's face had grown pale and hostile. "It is as though the very crown of understanding had come upon her pure spirit, as though she had been waiting as an instrument to be used for this place and time. I am willing to have suffered so long, to be healed and show her the way, when I see what it may mean."

Lucille looked at her aunt with a cold curiosity. To her eyes she had become merely something to study. She had a large feeling that it would be interesting if Lily also went into this category, and became presently something for her to study, too — with the scientific mind of Doctor Richards to assist her. Lily was young and a little silly, evidently. She had certainly shown herself the-

atrical the evening before. Merely a sentimental young girl, Lucille's quick mind began to sum her up.

"What do you mean by last night?" Lucille asked. "Lily recalled Mr. Longmore to a sense of the place he was in. Somebody ought to have done it. It was a pity that she had to."

"She cured him in that moment. She took away his disease. He is down-stairs now. I am sure he has come to tell her so."

"And you think —" Laura sprang to her feet, her face furious and her voice almost rasping. "You think that Lily 'cured' Bob Longmore — sobered him, by *Christian Science*! That is pretty good. I think it will interest him to hear it, — that he was reformed all in a moment by *Lily* — and *Christian Science*! Excuse me, Miss Beale, but I think I should prefer having any one who belonged to me a drunkard rather than a lunatic."

CHAPTER XI.

LAURA SHEPPERSON took care to pass the library door as she went by. It was partly open, and she could see Lily and Doctor Richards there in earnest talk. A smile, which her dramatic sense told her was sarcastic, lifted her eyebrows. Neither of them saw her, and she slipped out of the front door and went down the slushy streets, picking her way. As she turned the corner she saw Mrs. Feeley sitting at her window beckoning to her, and she opened the gate and went in. Gladys Feeley, a young-old girl, with thick oily hair and a complexion that was a trial to her, opened the door for her.

“Mamma hopes she isn’t taking up too much time, but she wants to ask if you will take the mission class Miss Nonie Partridge is giving up. Miss Nonie is going to Lexington.”

Mrs. Feeley sat in her chair all day and planned work for the church in a manner which showed rather unusual executive ability. She was a victim of gout, and an ever increasing bulk.

Ten years before, Mr. Feeley, a meek little man

with a cough and blinking pink eyes, had come to Stevensburg as the business manager of a large coffin factory. His wife followed him, carried in a chair, with her colourless little girl. Her first act was to present her credentials as the member of a church in a distant city, unite herself with the church in Stevensburg, and ask Mr. Lessing to give her work to do. He asked his congregation to call upon her, which most of them did. She was indefatigable in working. Nothing was too hard or too humble for her to undertake. In a parish where almost everybody considered a payment of a certain proportion of the pastor's salary and an attendance at church was all that Christianity required, Mrs. Feeley was valuable. She had a soft and plausible manner, and an absolute genius for flattering confidences from people. In a vague way everybody realised that her house was a centre of the vulgarest gossip, but she threw a fine mist of ethical discussion over even the worst of the stories told there. Now and then, when she made a Rabelaisian slip of the tongue, she meekly mentioned that in scourging sin even the Master was plain of speech.

It was not until years after she was intrenched as one of the characters of the poor dry-rotting old church that Stevensburg learned that she was of a humble Hebrew family, and realised that she would never have attained her present social

position had she had the use of her legs. As she grew older her dark cast of features grew more pronounced, and she sat in her chair like a brown spider, drawing toward her all the fat flies who fed upon carrion, some butterflies and gnats, and a few blundering working-bees.

Gladys had come home from the Beale party, faintly conscious that there was something in the air. She had spent the evening as a wallflower in the nervous society of two or three other young girls who seemed unable to find that place where the child meets the woman. Nobody took the trouble to talk to them about anything, and all day long Mrs. Feeley had sat at her window with a pretext for catching whoever went by.

It did not take long questioning to get the story from Laura. She was full of it to bursting. She told to Mrs. Feeley's greedy ears the account Catherine had given of her own cure, and the astonishing claim that Lily had cured Longmore.

"Let her cure me," said Mrs. Feeley, challengingly. Then she set herself to the task of giving comfort to Laura.

"As though if your influence, the influence of the woman he loves, would not bring him to a realisation of his state, anything could! Did you ever think," Mrs. Feeley hinted, softly, "that Lily Beale was something of a flirt, fond of admiration?"

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"I have always been sure of it," Laura said.

"It is best not to condemn her *too* much," Mrs. Feeley said. "Some girls have that light nature which cannot help trying to attract masculine attention. Let us hope she will get over it. It is unfortunate that in her efforts to show herself attractive she should have tried to wean away the lover of her dearest friend." Mrs. Feeley shook her head in sorrow. "It is probably the influence of her aunt. I have heard that she was — well — a *little* too fond of gentlemen before her illness. Sometimes afflictions are for the best. They save families worse things." Laura wondered if Miss Cathie had been that terrible thing known as "fast" in rural communities. She had never heard it, — but then she belonged to a new generation. She laughed a little now.

"Well, certainly Miss Cathie didn't act much like a saint last night. Her waist was about nineteen inches around, and she danced with every man in the room."

"It takes more than words and a pose of sensationalism to convince," said Mrs. Feeley, as though a thirty-six inch waist might be one of the things necessary. "But do you mean to tell me really, dear Laura, that Miss Beale told you that Lily had cured Mr. Longmore by Christian Science?"

"That is what she said."

"I think Mr. Lessing should hear of this." Her mouth closed over her prominent teeth and her nose pushed forward. "When rank heresy like this comes into the church there should be an investigation. It is simply a belief in witchcraft and heresy, and I am sure that Mr. Lessing will not allow his church to be made the field for any such practices."

This part of the subject was amplified to every visitor that poor little Gladys could get into the house all day. It was late in the evening when Mrs. Allaire came in to bring a report of a committee. The boarding-house kept her busy, but Mrs. Allaire had the social spirit which must reach people upon one pretext or another. The tale was unfolded to her with eager questionings concerning Doctor Richards.

"How is he going to get out of it? I am not feeling so well to-day. Would it be too much to ask the doctor to come up and see me this evening? I wonder," she added, "if Mrs. Lessing will call upon Miss Catherine Beale?"

She spoke as though Catherine Beale had suddenly become an outsider, some one to be judged by this upstart Jewish woman.

When Doctor Richards came to see his patient that evening, he found her almost feverish with her excitement and daring.

"Doctor Richards," she said, almost at once,

and with an impulsiveness which sat oddly upon her bulk, "I am thinking of trying Christian Science." She knew that he would not speak of her heresy, and she could think of no other way of opening the subject.

Richards simply lifted his eyebrows with the indulgent smile which is part of the professional manner.

"I want to be cured. If Miss Lily Beale can cure Mr. Longmore of his terrible heritage, can actually make him sober, she should be able to cure me." She waited to hear what Richards would say. The shrewd Jew's eyes were taking in the expression of the lean face in a way he could not realise.

"Laura Shepperson was here to-day, telling me of what Lily had done. Naturally, poor girl, she feels very badly about it."

"Badly, because Longmore is sober?"

"Of course not. Although there *is* that verse about 'false prophets,' and 'dreamers of dreams,' isn't there?"

"If you are going to try a new cure, it is hardly necessary for me to prescribe for you," Richards said, rising and snapping the rubber band on his prescription blanks.

"Of course I was joking, but don't you think it would be a good test for her to try me? Do you think Christian Science would cure me?"

“No.”

The town was further edified the next day by an elaborated account of this interview, and Richards's heart was sore. The story spread from servant to servant by way of the mistress. People in the very slums heard it with sickening details. Only those who live in a small town can know the flights possible to the wings of gossip, and how great a burden they can carry.

CHAPTER XII.

NATURALLY the Beale family were the last to hear any of this gossip.

It was about a week old when one day Lily was sitting in her little nest of a room reading, when old Ann the cook opened the door and looked in. She was an Irishwoman who had drifted around Stevensburg for years, quarrelling with everybody, until she found a haven in the Beale kitchen.

"Miss Lily," she said, "I wisht ye cud come down to me kitchen a minit."

"What is it? Are you making something good?" Ann smiled upon her in a way that showed why she found it possible to stay with the Beales.

"No, miss. Jest ye come, if ye plaze. Emily, she's out."

Lily put away her book and went down ahead of Ann. The big new kitchen was a pleasant place. The hooded range was hung about with the blue *batterie de cuisine*, and the gas flared behind the transparent doors. Ann and Emily

had each a window-box where mint and parsley made a bright spot of colour before the white curtains.

Seated in Ann's particular red-cushioned rocker before the fire was a woman who held against her shoulders a scarecrow of a child. The woman wore a new black straw hat with loops and bows of cheap crêpe, and her dress was of black calico. The coat that hung on her shoulders was gay with jet beads, but, being black, was evidently considered mourning. She stared at Lily as she came in, evidently not knowing enough of manners to arise to speak to her. It was a flat, sallow, high-cheek-boned country face that looked at her with curiosity. The child was almost a skeleton, and kept up a low moaning, like an animal in pain. Its teeth had decayed, evidently as they appeared, and the whole picture was that of some pitiful old gnome. The black eyes fixed themselves on Lily as she came in.

"Mis' Smoot thought maybe ye' cud do some-
thin' fer th' babby," old Ann said. "It's bin
sickly fer some time."

"Sence it wuz borned," said the mother, stoically. She was looking at Lily with an intentness that embarrassed her. "I've had it to all th' doctors. I los' my old man las' month, an' sence *he* died they ain't been nobody to stay home with

Lutie, an' I've had a purty hard time — what with tryin' to wash an' take care o' her an' all."

She was mechanically taking some wrappings from one of the child's limbs.

"What did you want me to do?" Lily asked. Her face was a little pale at the revelation of the child's hideous ailment. "Surely it isn't necessary to unwrap the baby."

"I thought you'd want to see it. They say it's king's evil is th' matter. I've heard said by them that knows, that if quality touches king's evil it ruther helps it." She began putting back the wrappings hopelessly. She was ashamed now that she was here, to tell what she had actually come for. She had heard all sorts of fantastic tales of the wonderful things this girl had done. According to the rumours "Over-the-Tracks," she had cured her aunt who had been helpless for twenty years, so far had the story travelled. She had heard that all this young lady had to do was to touch a sick person and he was cured. She had half expected to see her clothed in flowing robes like the sacred characters in a panorama. But here was just a very pretty young girl with a jaunty black ribbon bow on top of her head. The sort of young girl she saw every day "over in town."

Mrs. Smoot had come to the back door and told old Ann that somebody had told her that

Miss Lily could help the baby, and she wanted to see her. Evidently, she thought contemptuously, it was all a "fake." Probably sarsaparilla would be better. She resented the miles she had trudged and the time she had taken from her washing. All the hazy atmosphere of the supernatural in which she had had dreams evaporated in this cozy kitchen. She hoped anyhow they'd give the baby some milk. She looked around to see if there was any.

Lily leaned forward suddenly and lifted the child to her arms. All revulsion of feeling at the hideousness of the thing had gone from her. Her mind, the habits of all her life, had controlled her for a moment. She had almost forgotten that there were others who suffered in the world beside her aunt, who was well again, and Bob Longmore, who was behaving like a man again. Through all Lily's being surged the Divine Life, the Divine Pity. She took the miserable little wreck of generations of stupid, evil thoughts and lives in her arms, and as she touched it, the dog-like whine, with which the child voiced its pain, ceased. She hugged the baby to her.

"She likes ye'," old Ann began. The woman, her face working, rose up.

"Oh, Lordy, ye' can cure her!" she cried out, in a loud voice. "They tole me ye' could do it. Oh, fer th' love o' God, miss, do it. Ef ye'

knowed how she hurt an' cried, *allus, allus!* Oh, fer th' love o' God!" The mother-love in her face transfigured it. She made a picture that Bastien Le Page would have loved to paint. Old Ann crossed herself. It was as though the very Spirit was making itself almost visible in that clean afternoon kitchen. Lily held the still child close for what seemed to them a long time. The woman had fallen down on her knees, and was crying over and over, "Oh, God A'mighty! Oh, God A'mighty!" with strong convulsive sobs. All the hope that she had carried over the rough dirty streets with her child, she felt was being realised. Every step of the way she had come, she had tried to scoff and keep down her hope by saying that it was all a "fake." But she had hoped, and she had believed. Lily handed the silent, smiling child back to the mother.

"Your baby is well," she said, quietly. "Take her home and let her sleep. To-morrow you will see that she is like other children. She must be fed and grow fat." She smiled, and the poor little miserable smiled back at her. The woman grabbed at the child, drew her poor hat on her head, and started away.

"Maybe they'll believe when they see," she said, triumphantly. She knew without seeing.

"Th' pore thing," Ann said. "It's a pity she can't tak' th' kid to Lourdes. Mabbe Father Pride

has got a bottle o' Lourdes water. I'll sure be afther askin' him. Do ye think, Miss Lily, that yer touchin' th' pore, afflicted thing done anny good at all?"

"Not my touch, but the child is well now," Lily said. "The great God never made suffering."

She went back to her little room up-stairs where the pretty girlish belongings lay all about, but it seemed to her that in some subtle way they belonged to somebody else. It was a feeling born of the profound emotion through which she had just passed.

She stood in the centre of her room, and clasped her hands together. The tender light coming through the sheer white curtains of her windows surrounded her. After all, were not the painters right who surrounded their saints with a peculiar atmosphere? The light of the sun was the creation of God, an expression of his will, just as surely as a human being. Can it not be that the sun gives of its best to the best creations?

She felt reverent, so reverent, so consecrated, that it seemed to her as she stood there that she was in the very presence of the Creator. Through her sweet flesh, so pure, so untainted by ugly thoughts, so simple in its fresh health, born of love and goodness, the Creator had sent down his very creative spirit, and had made anew that little

child. And best of all, it was no weight of responsibility. Gladly, exultantly, she recognised it, recognised her right to it, as a divine gift, part of the very Creator himself. Sometimes, it is given to a body to be truly God's Temple.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE woman whose child had been treated went back to the Over-the-Tracks district, walking a road which was new and beautiful. She was light-headed with joy. She had pushed back her veil, and it seemed to her that a warm, balmy air blew. Everything was changed. The very road was smoother. Now and then she would stop a moment and look at her child, then give it a convulsive hug and go on again. She wanted to lift it up and show it to everybody she met and tell the story. Her usually dull, sullen face was made over. One would have said that Lily had cured her as well as the child, had kindled in her the light of intelligence. How can one say that the body rules when we each have seen joy or grief give our every-day friends a new face?

Mrs. Smoot looked at the big houses she passed. She wondered if there were any sick people in these houses, and if they could know that all they had to do was to go up to Judge Beale's and be cured. Of course if the young lady would do it for her, — a piece of poor white trash (Mrs.

Smoot was of the class which has humbly recognised its miserable state for two centuries), — she would do anything for her own friends. And then Mrs. Smoot laughed aloud.

“What y’ laffin’ at, mammy?” the child asked. Her own face had been one pathetic grin since they had started. “Air y’ laffin’ ’cause I be?”

“I was a-thinkin’ a fool thing,” Mrs. Smoot said. “I was reckonin’ ef they was any sick in these houses; jes’ as ef they *was*, they wouldn’t ’a’ hearn o’ that lady long afore we’uns. It’s pore chumps like us thet never gits onto nothin’. Yore pore pap wouldn’t be dead ef we wuz smart like big-bugs.” And for the first time Mrs. Smoot drew a heavy sigh over her limitations.

She had met only a few people on the way down, but when she reached the line of ugly wooden houses where she had a room, children swarmed around her and Lutie.

With a pride which brought colour into her face she set the child down on the one plank which protected the feet of the passers from Over-the-Tracks mud, and with a faith which was sublime in its perfection, she unwound the heavy muslin bandages from the child’s legs.

“Now, run along,” she said.

“Hi, say, Lutie Smoot’s a-walkin’!” the children yelled.

The listless, calico wrapper-clad women came to their doors and looked at the child. They had noticed that she had not walked, most of them had seen the horrible proofs of her illness, for they had visited her mother during the last illness of the husband and father, but her walking now made no impression upon them. That would come when they heard the means by which the cure had been accomplished. For aught they knew, diseases like that might come and go in a night.

At the door of the house where she had a room she saw a mud-covered buggy. It had been there once before since her husband died, and her heart sank at the sight of it.

Sitting, lounging in the seat, with one foot hanging out, was a heavy, dark man, whose straggling short beard and glasses gave him that look of pseudo-professionalism which is recognised as belonging to men who put it on when they first begin to prefix "doctor" to their names — whether with or without right.

He lumbered heavily out of the buggy when he saw Mrs. Smoot, and stood before her. The women came to the doors now, anxious to hear the controversy which they felt sure was imminent. These were the events of their poor lives.

"I thought I'd come around and see about that little bill of ours," Doctor Clay said, easily.

Mrs. Smoot twisted her hands together and flushed deeply.

"I'd pay you in a minit, Doct' Clay, ye knows I would, but I've had a purty hard time sence my ole man—I was a-comin' down yore way to-day to see ef Mis' Clay didn't have no washin'—"

"We have the laundry done in the house," the doctor said, waving his hand. He came closer.

"See here, now, I hear you've got a little place up on Pointer's Creek. How about that now?"

"But it don't bring in nothin'," Mrs. Smoot said, wonderingly. "'Tain't but jes' three acres. My ole pap an' mother lives thar. My ole man he paid off th' morgige on it. An' pap he deeded it t' my ole man 'cause he knowed he wouldn't morgige it an' let some skin git it."

There was a loud laugh from one of the men who stood by. He was a long, lanky creature, one of the notorious Sawyer family. Doctor Clay smiled too, but with no sense of embarrassment.

"But when you run up bills you must expect to pay them," he said. "I work for my living. I've got a family to support. I ain't any eleē-mosynary institution."

"Pap's place don't bring in nothin'."

"I guess it'll bring in a little something if it's

sold. I doubt if it will satisfy my claim. I was here to see Smoot a good many times."

"But ye don't see him no more," interfered Mr. Sawyer, but neither of them paid any attention.

"You wouldn't sell out pap," the woman said. "Why, thet place up thar's pap's. It's th' only place they got. You didn't do nothin' fer them, an' " — her face began to work — "what's more, ye didn't do nothin' fer " — she couldn't speak her husband's name — "*none* on us."

"That's the way with you people," Clay said, contemptuously. "You expect a doctor to cure anything. Smoot had to die. God A'mighty couldn't 'a' saved him. But I come down here forty-six times and my charge is two dollars. I'll say nothing about the kid. I'll throw in what I did for her, and let it go at that. Ninety-two dollars is what you owe me. I'll cut off the two dollars and make it an even ninety. But if you want me to do anything more for the kid, I'll have to charge you. That's business."

Suddenly Mrs. Smoot's face lightened again, and her voice was a pant of excitement, as she called: "Lutie, Lutie, come 'ere."

Clay looked at the child curiously as she came up. For an instant there was something almost like fright on his face.

Her mother held her up and stripped the legs.

The skin was perfectly smooth. The curious crowd had drawn around now.

"Well, by George, that salve is good!" Clay said. "I guess I ought to charge you for that." His eyes snapped.

"Salve! *Your* salve!" the woman cried. "Your salve hadn't nothin' to do with it, no-ways." She looked about at the crowd. "Lutie's legs was worse'n spoiled meat. You never done 'em no good no more'n you done her pappy. Ef I'd know'd then what I know now, her pappy'd been livin'."

"Of course you all can see I haven't done that child any good," the doctor said, sarcastically. "There you are, Mrs. Sawyer," to a shrinking woman who had come for her husband. "I saw you dress this child's legs when her father was sick. You know what they were, and you can see them now. You haven't had any other doctor, have you? He hasn't had time to do anything, anyhow. It's my medicine." He was racking his brain to remember what simple thing he had given the woman for the child.

Mrs. Smoot's voice rose shrill. "I have had another doctor, an' th' biggest the' is. Miss Lily Beale done that there, a-layin' on hands. Yes, *sir*, I went up there. I hearn what she done, an' I see *you* couldn't do nawthin' noways. She

jes' took Lutie up, an' she was *cured*. Y' can see she's well!" she finished, exultantly.

There was a buzz of excitement all through the group. People in the houses beyond saw the crowd and heard a confused sound of voices, and came out, the draggled women in the inevitable wrappers, generally carrying a child, and here and there a man.

"I hearn about th' Beale girl," they said to each other. They looked at Mrs. Smoot with new respect, as one who had spoken to one so far above them. They came closer, and looked at the child.

"She was awful," they said to each other. "She couldn't walk."

Clay looked at her curiously. He did not belong to the class that had heard the stories from the Beale household. He had heard vaguely that Miss Catherine Beale had said that she was cured by Christian Science, and it had seemed very funny, but just one of the cranks of a rich woman. He had an idea that most rich women spent the greater part of their time in bed anyway.

He turned around and laughed loudly.

"The Christian Scientists have got you, have they? You think you'd rather give your money to some fool woman, than to your family doctor? I guess Christian Science wouldn't have gone far

if it hadn't been for that salve." But he saw that nobody was listening. Mrs. Smoot was giving every detail of the cure to the curious crowd.

Clay looked at them scornfully and angrily. His practice was among these people.

"Well, Christian Science or no Christian Science, you'll pay me that bill, or I'll know the reason why. You can't run up a big bill and then change doctors." He got into his buggy and drove away.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE woman who had come for her husband was a little more decent-looking than the rest of the women in that part of Over-the-Tracks, although she belonged to its very pariahs. Nobody ever remembered to have seen Lyddy Sawyer in a loose wrapper. The very skin was tight on her face and the thick knuckles of her hands; and her light hair was drawn back until it gave her a frightened look. Lyddy was respected as no Sawyer had ever been before, but even she could not rise above the reputation of the family into which she had married.

There were half a dozen of the Sawyer brothers, sons of Lige Sawyer, who had gone to the penitentiary a year ago for stealing pigs.

They were a clannish lot, of exactly the type of the feud fighters back in the hills.

They lived a little isolated from the other Over-the-Trackers, in the midst of a swampy field, where they had put up half a dozen raw board cabins, tightened here and there by old pieces of tin, discarded roofing, and beaten-out

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tomato-cans. Pigs and children tracked through the sucking black mud around the doors. The place was known as "The Camp of the Israelites," because the Sawyers all bore the names of the prophets.

Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Elijah, Elisha, and Levi Sawyer, the sons of Lige, were suspected of every petty crime in the town.

They had married from the house-boats that drift up and down the Ohio River, carrying a people apart from all known civilisation. All of them, — except Jake. He had made a dazzlingly brilliant marriage. His wife had brought him a hundred dollars.

One summer, Jake, the tallest and best looking of the Sawyers, had worked on a bridge which a contractor was building over Pointer's Creek — in the very back of the county. The evenings being dull, he had attended the schoolhouse meetings where an old shoemaker exhorted, and had won the heart of the shoemaker's daughter by his curly black hair, and fine baritone voice in singing Moody and Sankey hymns.

Lyddy was an ardent Baptist. She had been converted one hard winter, and baptised through the ice of Pointer's Creek, and had always known respect in the "up on Pointer's" district, where her father was the house-to-house cobbler. And through the years with the Sawyers, the isolation,

the hard work, the disgrace, Lyddy had held her sense of respectability, and she had borne with Jake. She told herself that she was merely fulfilling the Biblical injunction concerning wifely duty. But Jake's voice in a "ballat" still had power to stir her heart.

As she led Jake back through the Camp to supper, her sisters-in-law, their frowsy hair in hard knots, looked through their windows, and sneered at her because she touched her husband's arm in public.

"Stuck-up" was what they called after her when Jake was not there, and when she started to the Baptist Church on Sundays.

At the church she was known to the ribald young as "the woman who slept in her clothes." They had never seen the Sawyer house, where everything not in daily use was kept in newspaper parcels under the bed, where even there a wandering baby might bring the bundle out at any moment.

After all the years Lyddy cringed a little at these hard sisters-in-law. She tried to act what she called "a Christian part" by them, but she hated, with every breath of her, all their ways. She tried to get away from them, and sorrowed every day that she had not sufficient influence with Jake to make him break with the rest of the family and move away. But the only influ-

ence with Jake was the dominant one of race. He would promise Lyddy anything she asked, but one could no more expect Jake to keep his word than to expect nails driven into butter to hold. It was not in the nature of things.

"Now, honey," Jake said, "thet thar Christian Science, thet's yore kind o' doin's, ain't it? Schlatter when he was here, he preached."

"Mr. Batton said Schlatter wasn't a Christian."

"Th' Baptis' preacher? Well," said Jake, judicially, "e's th' one thet ought to know." He was endeared to poor Lyddy's heart by always trying to be politely agreeable upon any subject.

"It'd be mighty nice ef people could lay on hands — an' be Christians," he added, virtuously.

"Thet young one had king's evil. I've hearn tell that ef quality touches king's evil it's cured."

The next day the story of the curing of Lutie Smoot was the exciting topic of all Over-the-Tracks, and Lyddy, sympathetic for the mother, but deep in prejudice against anything which was treated as truth over there, made one of her visits to her pastor. These visits were one of her dearest prerogatives, and encouraged by Mr. Batton, who listened eagerly to anything which contained what he called "human interest."

Not far from the social state of Over-the-Tracks himself, he drew most of his examples from the life which he understood.

Mr. Batton had come to Stevensburg only a few years before, from one of the interior eastern counties of the almost virgin State of West Virginia. He had been educated at a small denominational college in Ohio, where he worked for his board and tuition.

After some years in his little church in the back county he had felt the need of recuperation, and had taken advantage of the cheap excursion rates over the little branch railroad, and gone to Atlantic City for a few days.

What he saw there shocked him deeply, and sent him home crying out against Sodom. He preached a sermon which wakened up the countryside. Sights on a sea beach, which are so common to the travelled eye that they are practically invisible, were to him signs of the most fearful immorality. With bated breath, with terrible denunciations, he spoke of them. The next Sunday he preached a sermon "for men only," in which he described the way of the Scarlet Woman, as he saw and understood her on the beach and boardwalk.

Nature had given Mr. Batton a genuine talent for vivid portrayal, and he was in deadly earnest. He wanted to save these his sheep. He wanted

to warn them, to tell the fathers that they must bring up their sons and daughters so that these abominations should never touch them. He succeeded in giving them a picture which brought them grievous disappointment presently, for the next excursion from his little town carried every man and boy who could find the price of a ticket. But they had not the sensitive nerves and keen eye of their preacher. They came home feeling that they had been deceived, — and were resentful.

Mr. Batton reached Stevensburg about the time that a New York clergyman was making sensational raids for the purpose of showing the corruption of the New York police force. Mr. Batton, in common with dozens of other young men, tried, in all sincerity and righteousness, to follow his example.

Lyddy was encouraged to call at the parsonage and tell anything of interest. Like Mrs. Feeley, Mr. Batton disguised gossip under "keeping in touch with the people." Only in his case it was worked over into material for sensational sermons, which he truly believed to be "strong," after the manner of John the Baptist.

The Baptist parsonage was a little wooden house behind the big, ugly, red brick church. Its chief room was the study of the pastor, bare and clean with the anxious housekeeping of Mrs.

Batton. Mrs. Batton had been a school-teacher, and she applied her learning now chiefly to a consideration of health foods. She and her husband, quite unconsciously, fasted with the rigour of hermits. Her flat bosom had never held a child, and the dull round of her life was drying up the juices of her body.

She looked upon Lyddy with stern disapproval. It did not look respectable for the neighbours to see a Sawyer at the front door. A Methodist woman lived across the street, and Mrs. Batton's thin cheeks burned with mortification, as she remembered overhearing a remark concerning the "poor Baptists."

She ushered Lyddy into the study, and went back to her sewing. She sympathised with her husband, of course, but she did wish that he was more particular about what people said, and had a more respectable congregation.

Mr. Batton looked up from his work. He had a pile of ruled foolscap paper before him, and an encyclopedia volume. He was engaged in his spare moments in writing a book. It was to be a series of sermons supposed to be preached by John the Baptist resurrected, against the follies and wickedness of to-day. Sometimes he shook his head over the vehemence of his own words. Sometimes he looked up references in the ency-

clopedia, just as he sometimes searched for words in the dictionary.

He was annoyed at seeing Lyddy, but he waved her to a chair, and called her "Sister Sawyer."

Lyddy sat on the edge of the blue plush rocking-chair, and twisted her tight knuckles. She hardly knew how to begin now that she was here. Why should she trouble a great man with her anxieties? The happenings of Over-the-Tracks couldn't always be interesting.

"I trust your family enjoys good health," said Mr. Batton.

"Yes, sir. It's about that — at least, it's something like that that I wanted to ask about. The's a lady — Mis' Smoot — lives over our way, an' the' do say her girl's been cured of king's evil by layin' on of hands."

Mr. Batton arose hastily.

"Not that Schlatter again?"

"No, sir. Oh, no, sir. It's a young lady, Jedge Beale's girl, they was tellin' me. She don't do it Schlatter's way nowadays, they was tellin' me. She's a Christian Scient." Lyddy rushed on now. "I call myself a Christian, an' I ain't no wish to not believe anythin' that's Christian, but I thought I'd ast you. I gethered from what you've said some Sundays that the quality ain't Christian, dancin' an' sich."

Mr. Batton rose to his feet and began an

impatient stride up and down the room, snapping his thumbs against his forefingers in a way peculiar to him when he was excited.

At last this terrible heresy had come among his flock!

"Woman," he thundered, "when you listen to the blasphemies of these people, you stand in the way of hell!"

Lyddy rose to her feet trembling. "I was feared it wasn't all right. It didn't seem nateral."

"Christian!" cried Mr. Batton, bringing his foot down on the floor. "These people fight the churches. They are worse than heathen." He drew a long breath. "They are worse than Rome herself." He was pleasantly conscious of his dramatic tones. He lost sight of Lyddy in the headiness of his own oratory.

"By insidious methods, playing upon the credulity of the ignorant, the sick, the impressionable, the weak in body and in mind, these cohorts of Satan, these people, wearing the clothing they have stolen from the righteous, their faces leering behind the mask of meekness they have donned, come to plunge souls to perdition!" He walked across the room, and lifted up his arms. "From these sinful women, hot from the ballroom, their faces painted and their heads tired as was Jezebel's" (all women in what was known to Mr. Batton as "society," samples of which he had

supposed himself to have seen walking Atlantic City's boardwalk on an August night, were painted creatures), "good Lord, deliver us!"

Mrs. Batton opened the door and put her head in.

"What is it, Henry?" she asked, severely.

"Alas!" said poor Mr. Batton, sinking into a chair, "I find that there has come into this sin-ridden town a new terror!"

"What? Not diphtheria?" Mrs. Batton looked at Lyddy with disapproval.

"Worse. Worse," said Mr. Batton. "This attacks the soul."

"Oh," said Mrs. Batton, with relief.

Like a physician's wife, the wife of an earnest clergyman sometimes grows callous to those ills her husband goes out to heal.

"This lady" — Mr. Batton was a kind man, careful of the feelings of his people, except when he warned against sin — "tells me that a young woman, the daughter of Judge Beale, is carrying the pernicious, poisonous doctrines of Christian Science into her neighbourhood, killing, as they all do, the body as well as the soul."

"Driving off the doctors, and letting people die, I suppose. I thought they were too busy dancing and playing cards, going about before men half-dressed, to waste any time on anything else. I never pick up the evening paper without

seeing some account of their parties," Mrs. Batton said. "Henry, I think it is your duty to have them arrested. They shouldn't be allowed to commit *murder!*"

"It is my duty to warn my flock," said Mr. Batton.

CHAPTER XV.

TWO days after Mrs. Smoot had taken Lutie for her first walk, Judge Beale came home early with a copy of the evening paper in his hand. It had been given him wet from the press by a man he knew well, and who had heard some rumours of its contents. The papers were not yet distributed.

He went immediately to his bedroom, asking Jerry on the way to send her mother to him there.

"I think father is sick or something," Geraldine said. "He looks queer." Mrs. Beale ran hastily up-stairs. Her strong husband was never ill, and so seldom disturbed that it was an event in the household.

"What is it, Roger?" she asked, breathlessly.

He had seated himself. It seemed so odd to see him up here in the afternoon that in the face of that unusual situation anything might be possible. "What is it?"

"I am worried about Lily."

"*Lily*, what?" she asked, anxiously. "Where is she? Oh, you mean about her and Doctor

Richards. I think, dear, that it is just a lovers' quarrel. He sent her a box of roses this morning, and a new book. I am sure they will make it all up again. They are young. Young lovers are always a little silly. They think that is half the fun of the affair. I thought once of telephoning you that he had sent the flowers."

"It isn't that. It's this." He held out the paper. Mrs. Beale stared at the big, black headline,

"A Young Society Girl Who Heals the Sick."

Then followed an account of the cure of a child who was reported to have had a most loathsome form of scrofula from birth. The mother having heard of the young girl's powers, which had been, so the paper said, exercised in many other cases, had gone to her with the child. She had touched it, and the child was cured. The sores had disappeared, and the child, who had not walked for months, was beginning to run everywhere. The reporter had embellished the story with all the usual catchwords of his office, and supplied details with a lavish hand. There was a rude outline woodcut of the mother and child, and interviews with several small-fry physicians of the town, who gave their reasons for knowing that the thing was impossible; one with Clay was particularly offensive. At the bottom was a veiled allusion to a recent engagement of the young lady

to a prominent young physician. His views on the subject the reporter had unfortunately been unable to obtain because he was out of town.

"This is unpardonable in Cale Blackburn," Mrs. Beale cried, indignantly. "How dare he allow such a thing in the paper? Such stupid lies!"

"It is all a lie, then?"

"Of course it is. There isn't the slightest foundation for such a silly story."

"No such woman was here?"

"Probably no such woman exists. I have heard of this sort of journalism in the cities, but I never imagined we should suffer from it here. And to take a girl like Lily, of all people!" Mrs. Beale choked. "It is an outrage, and I hope you will make Cale Blackburn pay for it smartly."

"That I shall," said Judge Beale, grimly. "He has put himself outside the pale of consideration as a friend. He shall, too, make a public apology. But for pity's sake try to keep this thing from Lily. It would mortify her to death. And don't let Cathie hear of it, either. She will think that she has brought this notoriety upon the household, and it will hurt her."

"Roger," Mrs. Beale said, "I think she has."

Judge Beale looked surprised at his wife's tone.

"Of course I know Cathie loves us all dearly,

but she seems to be a little insane upon the subject of her cure. I think that her influence is bad for the children, particularly for Lily."

"What do you suggest? I cannot, nor do I wish, to turn my own sister out of my house."

"Nor I," said his wife, hastily. "She has been like my own child during all her years of helplessness, but I think that her disease must have weakened her brain. We did not notice it when she was so ill and helpless — but now —"

"Well, I wouldn't say Cathie was weak-minded," the Judge said. "She keeps up her end of an argument upon almost any subject just a trifle better than any other woman that I ever saw. She reminds me of father. She seems to see to the bottom of an involved subject with remarkable judgment."

"But she has fancies about her cure. Mr. Lessing came up to talk to her, and when I saw him afterward, he said that she seemed set in her curious opinions, and he thought best to say nothing to disturb her."

"I'll bet he did," said the Judge, and there was a sardonic smile on his face.

"But he is going to preach a sermon on the subject. I do not wish to do anything to hurt Cathie's feelings, but I think she should see this paper and know what silly things are being said."

Two days later the maid who waited on the breakfast-table spoke to Lily as she passed her the hot cakes.

"There's a woman in th' kitchen would like to see you, Miss Lily," she whispered, excitedly.

"What is it, Emily?" Mrs. Beale asked.

"There's a woman would like to see Miss Lily," she said.

"What woman? What does she want?"

"I donno 'em," said Emily, in confusion.

"She is a poor woman. She said she wanted to see Miss Lily. She's got a little girl with her." Mrs. Beale looked at her husband. There had been an abject apology in the paper the evening before, signed by the editor. The reporter who had brought in the story of the cure of the child had been discharged.

"I think it is probably a woman who was here not very long ago," Lily said, rising.

"Stop, my dear," Judge Beale said. "I wish you to see this woman here."

"But, poor thing, it might embarrass her."

"Not too much, I think. Emily, ask the woman to come here. I do not approve of young ladies seeing all sorts of people alone."

"Dear me, papa, you *are* getting particular," Jerry said. "Now, if it were a young gentleman —"

Mrs. Smoot came in leading by the hand an

ugly, black-eyed little girl. When the child saw Lily, she ran to her and held out her arms.

"I kin walk. I ain't got any sores any more," she said, huskily. "Nothin' hurts me. I'm well." Lily looked down at her, and a quick look of joy and pity came into her eyes.

"What can we do for you?" Judge Beale asked of the woman.

"I jes' come to show Miss Beale this lie in th' paper sayin' she never done it. I didn't see it 'til late last night or I'd 'a' come then. A blacker lie never was tole. She cured Lutie, an' I have them that knows it. Lutie was all sores, and now she's well. That very evenin' I took off th' rags, an' her skin was as good as anybody's. I knowed she could do it jes' as soon as I seen her tech her. I knowed it —" The woman, an ignorant, uncontrollable creature, broke out into loud sobs. "An' now they've put in th' papers it ain't so. I want Miss Beale to know I've done nothin' but walk th' town an' show 'em what she done for Lutie."

"What does this mean, my daughter?" Judge Beale's voice was not as well under his control as he would have wished. Lily looked at him, unable to speak. Her whole being was irradiated by the emotion of realising that she had been able to do this wonderful thing. It was too wonderful to talk about. But there was no sympathy

in her father's face. He was sterner than she had ever seen him in her life.

"What does this woman mean?"

"The child here was —"

"She wuz one mass o' sores," the woman cried, eagerly, "an' Miss Beale jes' teched her an' she got well. I knowed she'd be. I tole Lutie all the way I was kerryin' her that th' lady could make her well, an' she done it. I ain't goin' to have no one lyin' an' sayin' she didn't."

"If you will take the child into the kitchen they will give it some milk," Miss Cathie said. She saw the expression on her brother's face. She left her seat and led the way, smiling at the child as she took her from Lily's side.

Judge Beale regained the control of himself which he had almost lost.

"Say, Lil," Jack said, "does that jay woman think you cured her ugly kid by touching her? She must be crazy. I didn't intend to tell you anything about it, but the boys at school asked me if it was true that you could make people think they were well. There was a professor here last summer while we were at Atlantic City, the boys said, that could make people think there were bees in their hair, and make 'em follow him all about. They wanted to know if you could do it. The Watson boys said Mr. Lessing told their mother you could. And they wanted to know

if they couldn't come over sometime and see you do it. The man charged a quarter."

"If a Watson boy or any other boy insults your sister by comparing her to a travelling fakir, and you haven't the spirit to thrash him, I'll see if I cannot give you some," Judge Beale said, quietly.

Geraldine arose and left the table. "If Lily is going to behave like this I'm not going to school," she announced, tearfully. "I didn't speak to any of the girls after recess yesterday. I think it's a pity my own sister wants to make us all miserable."

Mrs. Beale's mouth was set tight. Lily looked from her father to her mother. Jack, with a hasty excuse, had followed Geraldine. Gradually the look of distress had left her face, and it was smooth and beautiful. Her father's brow cleared. She was his eldest born, his darling, and her beauty and charm soothed his anger.

"My dear," he said, "I think it is time that this silly nonsense should cease. Your aunt's hysteria seems to have affected you, and we must not have that. Both your mother and I are deeply disappointed. We had thought you — we had forgotten how young you are, and that poise of character must come with years. We love your aunt dearly, and were so rejoiced at her recovery that we did not wish to say one word to mar the

joy of it. We are to blame for not realising that she had always been an influence to you. Doctor Richards tells me that your aunt's hallucination is due to her long years of confinement. All that time nature was healing her, but she did not know it. In a few months, in a year, she will see her cure in its true proportion. But we must not let her lead you astray before that."

It was with astonishment that Judge Beale heard his always dutiful daughter answer him. "Do you think, papa, that the woman who was here just now, was the victim of an hallucination?"

"Certainly. You saw that she was an ignorant, superstitious creature."

"But I saw her child's sores. She couldn't walk."

"So she says. These people love a sensation. There was a man who called himself Schlatter here a year or two ago. He 'cured' dozens of people. I doubt if you could find one of them now, but they declared themselves cured of every known disease at the time. It is very mortifying to find our name and our daughter placed in such a category."

"But it is so simple and so beautiful," Lily pleaded. "Do let me tell you — let Aunt Cathie tell you. There is really no need of any sickness

or sorrow on the earth. We are all perfect — truly — ”

“ Allow me to differ from you. I consider my daughter far from perfect when she sets her judgment against mine. This thing must cease.”

“ Would you have had me leave that poor little child to suffer ? ”

“ That little child should never have come near you. You certainly did not allay her sufferings in any true sense. You have given one who seems to me an ignorant fool a hold upon us. Unless I am not mistaken, we shall be obliged to send her out of the town to quiet her, or we shall be overrun with beggars.”

“ I should be glad,” Lily said, “ if every soul who suffers in this town could be brought to me, that I might make them understand this great thing. It is the simple ones who understand. That is proved, papa, by my understanding before you do. But you will, you *must*.”

Judge Beale arose as though he had not heard her.

“ It is not often that I lay a command upon my family, but I positively forbid this subject of Faith Cure, Christian Science, or whatever you call this nonsense, being mentioned in this house again.”

“ Then, Roger,” his sister said, from the door, “ I must go away. I cannot stay here and not

bear testimony as to what has been done for me. Pardon me for speaking, but I think you are doing Lily the greatest injustice. What has she done that is not good? She has shown the Living Spirit that is within them to two miserable creatures. She has made them well, as I was made well. I look upon her as one to whom the insight came almost as it came to the originator of this wonderful science of the mind." She put her arm around Lily's waist, and they, two beautiful creatures, stood there together, looking at the father and brother.

"You know that this house is your home always, Catherine, but even you must obey its laws. I consider this talk of yours meaningless, hysterical, ridiculous. I should be remiss in my duties did I allow it to go on. I shall not. My daughter is under my control; you are not."

Catherine smiled. "Do you think, Roger, that if you had lain for nineteen years on a bed of pain, and this 'nonsense' had cured you, brought you back to health and happiness, had opened out a vista at the end of which all sin and suffering of the earth disappeared in the light it irradiated, you would deny it, and creep back to darkness and pain?"

"My dear Cathie, you are excusable, but deluded. I am seriously disappointed in Lily. She

is behaving in a manner I did not believe possible in a well-bred girl. I will have no more of it."

"Father," Lily said (her father should not mistake her attitude. It was impossible to her to deceive him), "Mr. Longmore is coming here again this morning. I promised him—I cannot disappoint him. He is beginning to understand, but he is—he is like Peter walking on the water. He is afraid."

Judge Beale's face underwent a change. For one instant his daughter saw something almost like contempt there. He was a handsome man, who looked hardly old enough to be the girl's father. Sweet as was the domestic life he had led for years, there were yet lingering memories of the way of a man with a maid. Then the tiger flew out.

"If Bob Longmore ever enters this house again, he will answer to me for it, and I shall tell him so within the next fifteen minutes. If my daughter is weak enough to be the plaything—"

"Roger!" his wife cried, warningly.

"This is no time to pick and choose soft words," he said, furiously. "If my child cannot take care of herself, I am still here to protect her." He went into the hall, and they heard him take his hat and coat and depart.

CHAPTER XVI.

WE are apt to catch up the characters in a real drama when the action begins to show itself to the world, and demand why they committed the preliminary acts which have brought about the troubles of which dramas are made. In novels all the characters in whom we are interested are generally the victims of misfortunes instead of their own blunders. In real life it is sometimes different. Some of our people had reason to think of mistakes in after days. The controversy over the woman and her child did not stop at the Stevensburg papers, but was taken up by the sensational press of every other town in the State, and even became the subject of a column in that organ of truth, the *Maurilla Question*. There was in Stevensburg at this time a correspondent for these papers who wrote novels for newsboys between his imaginative flights in the news columns. The story which he sent to the *Question* was written in the form of an interview, and fairly dripped with silly detail. Every one of the stories spoke of

the ruptured engagement between "the beautiful miracle worker" and her physician lover. The *Question* gave a description of the "magnificent, palatial mansion" of the Beale family, famous in the history of the country. Lily was described as coming to meet the interviewer in a "flowing robe of white, her hair unbound," and "moving across the floor with soundless tread, as one in a trance." She was made to say that she had devoted her life to healing the sick, and that she would not marry Doctor Richards, as she considered all doctors "murderers."

Judge Beale had a theory, the result of a long, legal experience, that the man who fights a newspaper is more or less of a fool, but he went to Maurilla to enter a suit against the *Question*. He discovered there that he had only a man of straw to fight, as the owner of the paper had been for some years an exile from his native State, and did all his work from Washington. An agitation in the courts could only add to the notoriety and annoyance.

The day of the *Question's* appearance Doctor Richards walked into Judge Beale's office and told him how matters stood between him and Lily. The two men asked each other what was to be done.

"If I might marry her and take her away from all this," Richards said. "Of course it is merely

a temporary hallucination. Lily is too sensible, too clever, to have her head turned by this nonsense."

"Richards," Judge Beale said, "I have been married for over twenty years. My wife has been an angel of goodness and sweetness, and my sister something like a saint. I would have sworn that I knew good women, that they held no mysteries for me. But my wife seems to think that I am a poor creature that I have allowed this scandal to come upon the family, and my sister seems to think that there is nothing to worry about." The Judge went over to his book-shelves, unlocked a cabinet in the midst of them, and took out a bottle of old whiskey.

"My nerves are shattered with this strain. I am growing afraid to meet my old friends in the street. Have a drink."

Richards pushed the bottle away.

"Judge Beale, will you use your influence to persuade Lily to marry me and go away for a time?"

"No, I won't."

"Why?"

"Because it isn't fair to you. You are a physician. If your wife went about with these crazy notions it would ruin you. Until Lily comes to her senses, let matters rest."

"That I will not. Do you suppose I am going

to have the name of the woman I love bandied about, and do nothing to prevent it?"

"Richards, if she would marry you I should be happy. But she will not. Take my word for it, she will not unless you will promise to let her go on with this superstitious folly; and that I know you have too much common sense to do. I sent that Smoot woman to the country after getting her out of the hands of that blackguard Clay. She has a little place up in the back of the county that he was trying to get away from her, and she was glad enough to go. I offered her twenty dollars a month for a year to stop her silly tale. Do you think she would take it? Not she! She whined out that the child would get sick again if she did not 'bear witness.' I suppose those newspapers pay her more. I told Bob Longmore that he was a — fool, and that only my respect for the sorrows of his mother prevented my having a summary settling with him. I can't understand him. He seems to have lost all the spirit he ever had. He took no offence at my words, but asked me if I thought he was cured. I told him that I expected to see him drunk within ten days."

Other people besides Judge Beale told Longmore the same thing. His mother had gone to Mrs. Beale, and their old friendship hardly bore the strain of the complication which had arisen.

"I want to see Lily," Mrs. Longmore said.

"For what?" Mrs. Beale asked. She sat formally, as though this were a casual stranger instead of one of her oldest friends.

"I want to thank her for bringing Robert to his senses. Wait a moment. I do not care *how* she did it. She did it. I am ready to believe anything, *anything*, if he *is* cured. Do you know, Mary Beale, there have been times when I have been sorry that I was not converted to Catholicism, and taken my boy, when he was a child, to Lourdes? I am sure that Lily could do nothing but good. Robert feels like getting down and kissing the hem of her dress."

"Oh, it will not last," Mrs. Beale cried, impatiently. "You know that Robert has been sober for weeks at a time before this. It is just one phase of this disease. And then — all this notoriety will become something worse. We shall be under an avalanche of ridicule. I am not reconciled to it. I cannot forgive Catherine."

"For being cured?" Mrs. Longmore asked.

"For bringing this terrible thing into our happy home. We are pointed at on the streets."

Mrs. Longmore sat smiling curiously. The long years of trouble that had been hers had kept her apart from the world to an extent, and she had come to have a new view-point. Things which loomed large in some eyes seemed small to her.

"I suppose," she said, as though she were thinking, "that when the people Christ healed went home, their families felt something the same mortification. Here was a man who had been respectably blind all his life, and suddenly a wandering peasant preacher came along, who put a little mud upon his eyelids and he could see. It puts a new light upon the miracles."

"I think you are blasphemous."

"Do you?"

"I think it is blasphemous to compare these people who worked upon Cathie's hysterical state to the Saviour."

"And yet they claim to have cured her by the same means. They take his words for their guidance."

"I do not know whether you have taken up this folly or not," Mrs. Beale said. "I only ask you not to encourage Lily in it by talking to her. She is breaking our hearts. And I wish that you would tell Robert what an injury all this is doing her, and to beg him to hold no communication with her."

"Mary Beale," Mrs. Longmore said, "your daughter is your daughter, and my son is my son. Do you think I am going to let any straw that will help my son go by if I can snatch it? Do you think I believe that Robert is going to stay sober, that he is actually cured? No. I wish

to God I could. But I have hoped and prayed and struggled with my own convictions for thirty years. I do not believe that Lily or any other power on earth can cure Robert. But Lily is a sweet young girl. She has the beliefs that I had when I was a girl — when I thought that Robert's father could be cured by me."

"The cases are entirely different," Mrs. Beale said, hastily. "Lily is nothing to Robert. They are nothing to each other. If Robert wants the influence of a woman, he has you and he has Laura Shepperson. He should ask nothing of Lily. She is under no obligations to him whatever. I am glad you see the matter in its true light. We are horribly mortified. Only the mother of a daughter can realise it. You have never had a daughter. It is impossible for you to know. Girls themselves do not realise how they can ruin their whole lives, make themselves 'queer,' apart from the rest of the world. A young girl must walk the conventional path." Mrs. Beale hurried on. "As you are sensible enough to see that Lily can do Robert no good, please help me to stamp out this insane folly."

"I am not sure that she can do him no good. She has done him a great deal of good already. I ask nothing more than that he shall keep the good she has done him. It is for that reason that I want to see her. I want to ask her to keep

this power over him that she has shown. To tell her I want to help."

Mrs. Beale rose. There was an excitement in her face, very unusual to its healthy, kind placidity. Everything about Mrs. Beale was sweet and pleasant. Her hair waved away from her forehead with conventional regularity, and her teeth were as even as grains of corn. She had walked with gentle dignity through life, quite unconscious that a large part of her happiness was built on the belief that she and her husband and her children were just a little better than any of their neighbours. She read the story of the Pharisee with a clear conscience, as one for whom it had no point.

"Roger has forbidden Lily to speak to Robert, and he has also forbidden the subject of Faith Cures to be mentioned in this house. I must respect his wishes — which are my own."

Mrs. Longmore arose also. "Mary," she said, "I am not able to understand you. I thought I should find sympathy here. You and your husband seem to me harsh and unkind. This might mean so much to my boy."

"You said yourself that you had no hope."

"We lose hope long after we lose belief in the possibility of its realisation," Mrs. Longmore said, sadly.

Mr. Shepperson went to Maurilla that day,

and Virginia went away to spend the afternoon. Laura wrote a note and despatched it to Longmore's law office by the son of the cook. It was characteristic of her aunt that she made no protest at this, which Laura did quite openly. Miss Creighton had the order of mind which saw a challenge to Laura in the story of Longmore's rescue by Lily. He was a creature to be driven from the door until there seemed a chance that another woman might save him; then he became valuable.

Longmore promptly responded to the invitation to call at the Shepperson house that afternoon, and Laura spent the rest of the day in nervous preparation. She darkened the parlour by lowering the shades, and then put them up again. The parlour was a long room that looked as though it had been furnished by an upholsterer. The walls had been painted by an "artist" from Maurilla, who had trailed coarse roses over a pink background. The furniture was pink and gold. Laura had dressed herself with unusual care, and had hesitated a long time over curling her hair in front. She wanted this talk to be very serious, and she had intended to dress the part. Smooth hair and a clinging black gown would have about expressed her state of mind, but after she had arranged that costume she discovered that she looked several years older than

usual. So the hair was curled, and a pink dress with some spangles on the bodice was substituted. A touch of carmine from the water-colour box (quite a different thing from rouge), brought a brightness to her triangular face.

She waited for Longmore to be settled in the parlour, whose adornment made just the proper setting for the curled hair and pink gown, and then she walked in, feeling very much like a heroine.

Longmore, his hat in one hand and his gloves in the other, stood by the mantelpiece looking, Laura was vexed to see, at a miniature picture of Lily Beale. It changed her feeling for him, which had become theatrically generous, into a hasty spite.

"I thought it best that I should see you and give you back your ring — into your own hands," she said, at once.

"Why must you do that, Laura?" Longmore asked. He had been engaged to be married to this girl so long that he had something the feeling toward her that a man has for his wife or for any other member of his family, for long possession does make a wife into a member of the family, one whose faults are almost as personal as one's own, and as little to be criticised. "I have been thinking these last days that I was going to be able to justify the trust that you have had in me.

This is not the time to tell me that you want release, is it?"

"Why do you think this?" Laura asked. She had seated herself in a large gold chair which caused her to look, with the set smile on her face, in her pink spangled gown, like a lithograph for the back of a bonbon box.

"That I am able to be strong? I don't know, but I do think it."

"You have thought so before," Laura said. There was a slender thread of contempt in her voice which Longmore had never heard there before. It roused something in him, and made him look at Laura in a new way, as though his point of actual physical vision was changed. He had not been in her home for months, and at the Beale party had been the first time he had seen her except in street dress since that time.

"Yes, I have."

"Your conduct at the Beales' the last time I saw you was not calculated to give me confidence."

Longmore started. His face grew eager, almost pathetic, in its hungering intensity.

"Laura, were you there? Did you see what Lily did for me? Do you know how I feel? — like a man who has been in a nightmare. Have you ever had a fearful dream, and dreamed in it that you had awakened and that it was all a dream, and then had it clutch you again? I feel out of

that horror I was in; but am I? When Lily came toward me that night and said that the mind was not mine, it was as though a bomb had burst in my brain. All at once I seemed to see my body just a lump of matter with the breath of life that wasn't mine, within it. And I was letting this miserable lump with its infirmities clog the soul of me. Since then I have felt free. Oh, merciful Heaven! nobody can know the slavery of a drunkard but the man who suffers it!" He arose and walked over to the mantelpiece again and took up the little silver frame that held Lily Beale's face.

"I suppose," Laura said, and she was almost laughing, "that you will begin practising Christian Science, too. I had heard something of the sort, but I had been led to believe that you had some strength of mind."

"I surely have not shown that I had any in all these years," he said. "I haven't by myself. I have proven that I was going to perdition as fast as a man could go. And then that child proved to me, she showed me in one flash, that I need not depend upon this poor body of mine with its cursed inheritance; then there was something else."

"She seems to have said all that in a very short sentence. You must have been peculiarly susceptible to Miss Beale's influence." She held

out the diamond ring he had given her so long ago. Longmore looked at it and then at her face. "Much more so than you ever were to mine."

Then Longmore said something that was tactless, and that a second thought would have held back. "Are you jealous of Lily Beale?" he asked.

Laura rose to her feet white with indignation, except for the two red patches left by the paint-box carmine.

"I am jealous of nobody concerning you, Mr. Longmore. I wish you to understand that you are nothing to me henceforth. I asked you to come here this afternoon to tell you so. My father has told me of your dissipations, but I could not realise what havoc they had made in you until I saw your conduct at Judge Beale's, where you insulted me as well as others. Lily Beale seems inclined to overlook the insult to her. Your conduct in using the period of sobriety which you know is only temporary, which you have had before, to flirt with a girl who has pretended to be my friend, proves to me how your habits have deteriorated your character — as well as your manners."

"You — nor any woman — will ever have a fonder friend than Lily Beale," Longmore said. Then he looked down at the gas fire, where the greenish flames played through the knot-holes in

the iron logs and over the asbestos moss. It was like a dream fire.

"Laura," he said, "I am selfish, perhaps. I am having an experience which is wonderful to me. We were lovers the other day. I have grown to feel that we were almost man and wife, that your sympathy and understanding was one of the things I was sure of. Understand and help me now. I —"

"If you imagine," Laura broke in, cuttingly, "that you can make me believe that you consider yourself cured by this — this spiritualistic nonsense of the Beales, you are mistaken. They are making you the laughing-stock of this town, and you seem to have become too callous to care. If your mind has become so weakened that you are the prey of charlatans, it is certainly no symptom of 'cure,' and if you are cynic enough to imagine that you may have what I believe men call 'amusement' out of a mysterious flirtation with a sentimental girl, and that I will tolerate it, you are equally outside the pale of my sympathies." Laura had thought of these sentences for days, but she had intended to deliver them differently, and with a different effect. They were to have been used in the way of argument.

Longmore took up his hat and gloves and

started for the door. "I wish you good afternoon," he said, formally bowing.

"Here is your ring," Laura said, almost rudely. "I wish you to take it, and please remember when you next lose your senses that my name has no connection with yours."

Longmore took the ring and went out. At the gate he met Virginia.

"Hello," she said, affably, "been making us a visit? I thought you would be up at the Beales', having a prayer-meeting. I wish they'd ask me up sometime when they are going to do stunts." She was holding the gate. "Couldn't I get you to smuggle me in? They say Lily is better than that man who was here last summer, that she can put you to sleep and make you believe you are a burglar or any old thing."

"I am afraid I can't help you," Longmore said, gravely, and passed on out, and went home.

At supper that evening he sat and looked at his mother.

"You are eating nothing, Robert."

"Mother, you never told me a lie in your life. You are a wise woman. I know that, although I haven't profited much by your advice."

Mrs. Longmore smiled. "Thank you. But why these compliments?"

"Do you believe I am cured of the taste for

drink, or do you think it is just one of the lulls in my disease? I read a French book once, by Ribot, I think. He said that a drunkard — ”

Mrs. Longmore gave a little cry. That was a word that seemed to pierce the very core of her heart.

“That is what I have been. There is no use in denying it. He said that an ordinary drunkard, who drank all the time, was sometimes cured, but that a man who drank at intervals never was. Do you believe that this is an interval, and that my vision of myself as a strong man, a man without vice, the conqueror of my body, is a mere hallucination?”

Mrs. Longmore's lips quivered, and she moved her hands amidst the tea equipage. “I do not understand these things,” she said. And then desperately, “Why don't you go and see Lily Beale? She understands. She can help you.”

“Because her father asked me not to call at his house, or to speak to Lily. He told me that I had made myself an obnoxious character, and that he could not have his daughter's name associated with mine. He was right from his point of view. It was a verdict I could not question. I have made myself into a man who ought to be an outcast, I suppose. What I fear is — I have always had a little of it — I have struggled

against it. What I fear is that — well, I am what Laura Shepperson said I was — a man whom excesses have weakened mentally as well as morally.” He looked at his empty plate, and his mother’s face settled into its mask of despair.

CHAPTER XVII.

ST. SAVIOUR'S Church in Stevensburg was always in need of money. The prosperous Methodist church just across the street put in new stained glass windows while the Episcopalians were giving a pink tea to obtain wherewithal to purchase gas. It was almost entirely a woman's church, there not being sufficient men in the communion to make out the list of the vestry. Consequently this body was made up chiefly of the best poker players in town, who happened to be in the church by inheritance, led by Mr. Shepperson. Judge Beale was also a vestryman, having been confirmed, like Jack, in his tender youth.

These men found the efforts of the ladies to raise money very amusing. Judge Beale was in the habit of figuring out that for a "supper" his family gave a turkey, a freezer of ice-cream, and a cake, at an estimated cost of five dollars. Then, as a matter of duty, they went to the supper and bought and ate five dollars worth of food. They had worked like slaves for three

days, had expended ten dollars, and the church, after deducting gas for lighting and heating, and the incidental expenses, was the richer by about two dollars. But the majority of the church workers found in this a social opportunity. Girls stood behind tables in their prettiest clothes, and sometimes there was an opportunity for fancy dress.

Since the new development of the town, the "new" people had made these festivities of more value. A lavish expenditure for home-made candy, and a tactful manner had won more than one woman a sort of social footing. Wives of oil-drillers who had "struck it," after the last educational period had passed, were called "good-natured," and by and by found themselves asked to card parties in all but the most exclusive families. The Beales were one of these. They had been people of "quality" as far back as their line reached, — pure Anglo-Saxon aristocrats, and — except for the one lapse into New Englandism — descendants from the younger sons of cavaliers who had come to seek their fortunes in the Virginia plantations. They had always had a kind word and an open house for their friends and for the needy. But there was a class between these two which they knew not, except in the most formal fashion. Many of their closest friends were poor. It was the dearest task of

Mrs. Beale and her husband to find the gentle, tactful way to ease the financial burdens of their friends who suffered under them. Mrs. Billings did not know that she and her daughter were able to keep their house open one winter when they had few boarders, because Judge Beale had told the butcher and the grocer that he would be responsible for the bills. But the Beales looked askance at the oil and lumber people who were beginning to colour Stevensburg. Judge Beale had expressed his views to his wife by saying that he saw no need of vulgarising his household by importing the ill-bred. He did not want the manners of his children lowered by contact. He pointed out Virginia Shepperson as an example of what an association with "new" people could do, although it must be confessed that Virginia was ahead of her teachers.

When the question of a church fair had been broached early in the fall it had been repeatedly postponed, until now, a day or two before Christmas, it was in full swing. As everybody in the church had been so busy making things for the fair that they had had no time for the ordinary Christmas presents, they consequently would be compelled to purchase from the church. Mrs. Beale carefully marked each of her sofa cushions "Sold" before she sent them down to adorn

the "table" where Lily and Miss Cathie were to sell cushions from a Turkish cosy corner.

Mrs. Beale had set her lips, those soft, pink, motherly lips that had never known much pressing together, when she realised that Cathie had accepted the eager invitation of the committee to take a table; and when Lily joined her, Mrs. Beale felt that she was without resource. She saw in her mind's eye how these two, her sister-in-law and her daughter, would attract the vulgar crowd, and it was as vinegar to her teeth and smoke to her eyeballs. And even her husband seemed to have deserted her. For days he had been going about with a seriousness quite unlike himself. She had seen him in that mood once before, when a man was tried for his life before him, a coloured man, whose mother had been his own nurse.

"Have you a puzzling case on hand, Roger?" she had asked.

"Very!" A heavy look settled on Judge Beale's face.

"Dear," his wife said, tenderly, "I wish that you would not worry. You have only to do your duty and the whole responsibility is out of your hands."

Judge Beale laughed with an inflection in his voice which his wife never remembered to have heard before.

“Duty! It is easy to say.” He felt himself growing hard toward his daughter. He feared to voice his feeling even to his wife, for he knew that feeling, once translated into words, is apt to grow into intolerance. The New England parson was alive in him, and he felt him. He wanted to be harsh. He had that spirit which feels that a loved one must be saved from folly at any cost. It was the spirit which burned the heretic and fed the early Christians to the lions, although Judge Beale, with his high tolerance, his science, his disdain of the bigoted, would have scorned to meet such an accusation in himself.

The burden of notoriety was bearing hard upon what gentle Mrs. Beale had no idea was her sensitive spot, — her pride. She believed herself to be a humble woman. A few weeks ago, had any one asked her, she would have said that the dearest wish of her heart would be gratified if Cathie could be well. And yet, now she felt that fate had tricked her by the curse of an answered prayer; her heart was hot with rebellion against what the healing had brought in its train. She fairly quivered under the mortification of it. No — Judge Beale felt that he could not add to her anxieties by any expression of his own hardness.

She was sitting on the window-seat in her bedroom finishing one of the cushions she had

promised long ago. As her long needle twisted around the silk and ran through, leaving a knot behind, she found herself following the pattern mechanically. She was trembling with what she had to say.

"Roger," she brought out, at last, almost timidly, "you said once that you thought — that a year abroad would be good for the children."

Judge Beale stopped in his walk up and down the room. It was just before dinner, and he had come home early, as the Christmas holidays had actually begun. The few days before Christmas always have more of the holiday feeling than the days after, and even courts adjourn when it is possible.

"It was impossible to go then, but now — Cathie seems well."

"I think she is," her husband said.

"And," went on Mrs. Beale, "I want to get Lily away from here for a time. Don't you think it would be best?"

Her husband resumed his slow walk, his hands behind him. "I am convinced of one thing," Judge Beale said; "Lily will not be cured of this by taking her away. It would be more likely to leave the episodes here crystallised in her mind, as something done, finished, of which there can be no question. She would leave when she considers herself successful, and the belief in these

things would become a part of her very nature. I have thought all this out, Mary. I have thought of little else. Then, too, to go now would be to make her almost into a legendary character. She could never come back and take up her simple life here again. This town is growing constantly, and while not many of the people who are coming in here are our sort of people, still they will be an integral part of public opinion. If Lily once gets in the eyes of her townspeople as she has been pictured in the papers, they will never lose that vision. She will always be something curious, abnormal. That must not be."

Mrs. Beale turned a quivering face to him, and to his surprise he saw that it was anger which agitated her.

"Roger, why do you not put your foot down firmly and say that Lily shall behave herself, that Cathie shall cease this nonsense? Why don't you tell them they are both fools, and make Lily deny these silly stories? They are lies, lies! Only this morning Virginia Shepperson told Geraldine that she heard that Lily was at the Longmores' the other night, that she rushed through the door and found Robert Longmore with a flask of brandy in his hand, and that when he saw her he let it fall. *My* daughter, *your* daughter, to be in a story like that!"

Judge Beale said nothing.

"I fairly *ache*," Mrs. Beale cried, "at what I know is in store for us to-night at the fair. I wish we could all stay at home. I tried to let Lily see, but I was ashamed to tell her. How can a mother let her daughter see she has done something that makes her afraid for her to go in public?"

Judge Beale patted his wife on the back. "My dear, do not exaggerate. I doubt not that Lily and Cathie will be spared scenes. They may sell your cushions, but I think a demonstration will hardly go farther than that. I think one look at them will dispel the notions of strangers."

The cosy corner booth was very popular, as Judge Beale had anticipated. All evening long crowds surged before it, and the cushions were all sold. Across the way Lucille Glover had a book-stall where everything was to be purchased, from a highly ornamented blotter to the last historical novel. She had kept an open eye upon Lily's booth, and it had been with a satisfaction tempered with doubt that she did not see Richards there. If he had appeared anywhere and absented himself from Lily's side, she felt that her heart would be light. Of course, Lucille told herself, she was not the sort of girl who would take another girl's lover, but there could never be anything but a "physical attraction" in Lily for a sensible man. There could be no communion of

mind. It was a good thing for Doctor Richards that this craze of Lily's had come in time to save him. It would have been a calamity indeed had it come later. The pity was that it had not come much earlier.

It was after nine o'clock that Lucille saw a large woman whom she knew as "Leftwick's mother," go up to the cosy corner and lean over the counter. Leftwick was the chief owner of one of the largest of the lumber companies, a man who had begun life picking up chips at a sawmill in Virginia. There is something rather fine in the minds of most people about the man who began life humbly in New England or even Pennsylvania, but in Virginia to be "pore white trash," in the negro vernacular, is to be low indeed. The difference is easy to see. The land was so poor in the North that a man might struggle along for years and accumulate nothing, and yet be a gentleman, and have gentlemen for sons, whose associations were all gentle. In fertile Virginia it was different. It was the lazy and shiftless and criminal, the sons of a line of similar ancestors who were very poor in Colony days. The only people their descendants could know were the ignorant and declassed. Even the house negroes considered them with contempt. It was from this class that Leftwick came. He was a large, serious, drawling, long-headed crea-

ture, whose business ability and shrewd humour were appreciated by the men. He knew no women. He had already become a familiar figure on the Stevensburg streets when his mother came to keep him company. Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like Mrs. Leftwick.

In her youth she had hoed corn, and hers was the simple soul that saw no reason why she should be ashamed of it. She was proud to tell anybody who would listen how she had worked, and how her Johnny had helped her, until here he was a big man with plenty of money that he "jest *made* her spend."

"Laws," said Mrs. Leftwick, "he took me on th' cyars away off thah t' N' Yo'k, an' toted me 'round, and took me into stores, an', says he, 'Maw, I've got five hunderd dollars that's jes' bu'nin' holes in me. Git rid uv 't, right away.'"

Mrs. Leftwick had evidently gotten rid of a good many five hundreds since that day. Her fat hands were blazing with rings. It was her son's delight to buy her everything she looked at. He was rich, and he remembered when his mother had pretended she didn't like bacon, and ate corn-bread and drippings three times a day. He didn't know why she did it then, but he did later, and a warm fire of tenderness was kindled in his heart that was always there. He never could make up to his mother for that bacon that his hungry boy-

hood ate. She hadn't been fat then, and every increasing pound she gained now delighted him. He used to sit at the dinner-table where the food had been cooked by the only man cook in Stevensburg, and calmly count up his mother's weight in dollars.

"I allow, maw, that taking an average, every pound you've got costs me about a hundred dollars. You *will* fatten on such expensive victuals. Now there's tar'pen. Tar'pen ain't so fattenin', an' it costs like blazes," he would add, plaintively.

Mrs. Leftwick would chuckle, and go on with her dinner. She was that happiest of women, the one who has daily and hourly flattering attentions from the man she loves best.

As she stopped and leaned over Lily's cosy corner, she wore a lavender brocade, with a vest of gold lace. Around her neck was a long chain threaded with diamonds, and in her much-dressed hair was a diamond comb.

But she radiated health and happiness. Every morning she drove with her Johnny to the office, and every evening she went after him. That and three meals left her simply enough time to go and see the poor people she had taken up, and whom she visited as a comrade and friend rather than a patron. She had lately been out of town,

and had just returned. She put out her hand to Cathie.

"I know you'll excuse me, Miss Beale," she said. "I tole Johnny I jest had to tell you that I was one of you, too. When I was in N' Yo'k last winter I had th' rheumatics 'til I thought I'd die. Or I had th' *bileef* in rheumatics. Th' was a kind lady had th' room next me, an' she heerd me groanin' an' a-carryin' on, an' she asted about me, an' *in* she come. She hadn't set with me long until all th' pain was gone. We had a lot o' talks after that. She certainly was clever to me. Johnny, when I tole him, he up an' giv that new church they've got in N' Yo'k enough to put in a good deal o' whatever it's made out of. Johnny, he read th' book t' me. It's jes' wonderful!" Mrs. Leftwick's words dragged into a drawl.

"It is indeed wonderful," Cathie said, taking the ringed hand. Mrs. Leftwick went on with more or less personal particulars, while the bystanders smiled ostentatiously, to make it plain to even those to whom they were strangers that they were participants in the common joke of "Leftwick's mother."

Mr. Lessing leaned over the Bishop's wife, who was passing through Stevensburg, and had stopped for the night. "I am sorry, very sorry,"

he whispered, "that our church scandal should be showing itself here before you."

It is extremely doubtful if Mr. Lessing believed that the wife of his Bishop would have seen anything had her attention not been plainly called to it. She was a stout lady, not so wholesome in appearance as Mrs. Leftwick, who looked upon her husband's field with the eye of an alien. About the end of the Franco-Prussian war she had visited Europe, and sometimes she left the impression of never having fully returned. At any rate she had never altogether crossed the Alleghany Mountains. It made no difference what the occasion or the main stem of the conversation, the Bishop's wife always contributed rather flavourless anecdotes of her journeying in foreign lands, which generally wound up by informing her hearer of the great influence of her own family in its native State.

But just now Mr. Lessing was a little tired of a thirty-year old description of a visit to the birthplace of William of Orange, and he went hastily on with a vivid account of Cathie, as "one of those imaginary invalids who retired (Mr. Lessing knew that the Bishop's wife would consider any reference to a bed as vulgar) for twenty years, and then grew tired of it."

"And that horrible, overdressed woman?" asked the Bishop's wife.

"That is the mother of one of the richest men in the State, — a poor white boy by origin. Miss Beale has said that she was cured by Christian Science. I am very glad that she has been shown the sort of company she will find herself in, in this absurd faith. She is a woman of breeding and refinement."

"The lower classes are always taking up strange religions," the Bishop's wife said. "It is curious that they ever find followers, as though any understanding of — anything —" she added, vaguely, "could come from such people. Now, that woman is exactly the type of American that so misrepresents us on the other side," and Mr. Lessing, with a sigh, realised that he had had only a respite.

"An' I've been readin' in the paper about your niece," Mrs. Leftwick said. "It's so nice to be able to do them things. I never could help anybody that-a-way. But I know what it means to be cured. I'll feel easy now if I ever *do* git silly enough to git sick after all I was told. But we're all fools!" Mrs. Leftwick said, generously.

Doctor Richards had come up while she was standing there, one hand holding Cathie's, Lily's hand in the other. He had heard the whispers of amusement, had seen the craned necks, had heard the story passed from one to the other that Leftwick's mother was talking Christian

Science to the Beales, and with the colour high in his face had tried to attract Lily's attention. But Lily was all interest. Here was another who knew that it was all true, who took it all as a matter of course. That in the eyes of the world she was a rich, vulgar nobody, meant nothing to Lily. This woman had felt the wonderful thing. She *knew*.

Doctor Richards hesitated a moment, and then he caught Lucille's eye, and crossed to her. Lucille's face was a little flushed, too. She had put on a college gown with a hood, and wore a mortar-board on her head, by way of costume for a book-seller. It gave her face a shadow about the too light eyes which was very becoming to them.

The eyes of the crowd went from Lily to her. They felt that they were assisting at a drama, and were correspondingly pleased. People who only knew the Beales by sight knew all the story through the recent gossip. They had hung around the booth where Lily was to be seen, and had been a little disappointed at finding only a well-bred young girl, with the simplest of dresses, and the happiest of faces, attending to her business of selling cushions as though it were the most important on earth.

Laura Shepperson was in another part of the

hall, but she made many errands to pass by the cosy corner. Every moment she expected to see Longmore there, and something like hatred burned in her heart. That he did not appear at all did nothing to ease that hatred.

When she passed, she was always gaily talking to somebody, so that she did not see Lily or Cathie. She had dressed herself with unusual care, and had spent the afternoon with the town hair-dresser, who had piled the crisp, peroxide-touched hair up in a manner which left the three-cornered face more artificial than ever. A lace apron with pink bows made her resemblance to a French soubrette startling. Holly Ainslee spent most of the evening sitting in her booth, where he announced that he was keeping books. Laura, who considered it a badge of social supremacy to have "the attention of gentlemen," finding Mrs. Allaire a little depressed by his being there, exerted herself to hold him. Then, too, when Longmore came he would see that she was not deserted. Holly, with the fatuity of his kind, began to wonder if Laura Shepperson wouldn't be a good match. It was time he was settling down. He felt that it would do no harm to make himself as agreeable as possible, so he began to prattle the news of the hour, which was his idea of conversation.

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He leaned over her confidentially: "Doctor Richards seems to be making quite a 'ladies change.'"

"I've been wondering; do tell me," Laura said, coquettishly. "You have so much insight. Do you think he is taking Lily's new fad seriously?"

"If sitting up all night is serious," Ainslee said.

"Does he do that? Lily must be very fascinating," and she laughed.

"I guess she isn't fascinating enough to — well —" Ainslee laughed a little, and hesitated, waiting to see if he dared go on. Laura's eyes invited him farther. He leaned over closer.

"I saw Mr. Longmore to-day in the hotel. He sat in a room next the bar for half an hour. He would start out and come back. Everybody was betting on how soon he would give in and go and — well, begin."

Laura's eyes narrowed. Who could have believed that here was the woman who had been the promised wife of the man whose struggle was so lightly told?

"Did he? Did he?"

"No. They said, though, they were willing to make new bets that he wouldn't get through another forty-eight hours."

"It is a terrible thing," Laura said. "Of

course Mr. Longmore is nothing to me any more."

"I knew that, or I wouldn't have told you," Ainslee said, quickly.

CHAPTER XVIII.

MRS. LEFTWICK'S house should have been considered good architecture, for it accurately represented the wants and tastes of its chief spirit. In summer the lawn was aglow with stars and old oaken buckets and such like devices in gay flowers, and the well-known little brother and sister stood in the centre of the lawn under their umbrella, perpetually wet from the fountain.

It was in the summer that the veranda was set out with rugs and red wicker chairs, making an exhibit of conspicuous comfort. The conductors and motormen on the new trolley road openly envied and admired. They had the greatest admiration and respect for Mrs. Leftwick. On very cold days in winter they were likely to be met by her grinning negro boy with a pot of hot coffee, or even a cup of soup. In summer, she once sent a big freezer of ice-cream out to the terminus. Johnny remonstrated over that. He reminded her that the men were not objects of charity, and that they could buy their own ice-

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cream. "Not like ourn," said Mrs. Leftwick. "I was thinkin', suppose'n you was a motorman; an' so I sent it along. Them boys, they'll take it as one friend to another." Which indeed they did. Leftwick was a large owner in the new trolley, and to the men he was the only owner. Every young man, and every man with sons "felt good" working for Leftwick. He was a living example that "the poor man had a chance." There was only one malcontent, and he was the general manager of the road.

Rossiter belonged to a Stevensburg family which had been famous for two generations for turning out clever men. The women were quiet, plain women, with dim, horsehair parlours, and a tendency toward black cashmere dresses. When trouble came to their friends they were always absent, and they greeted the sorrow-laden as though they bore them a grudge. But to their own minds, and to the minds of many of their fellow townsmen, they made the very cream of aristocracy. When DeLacy Rossiter elected to become an electrician instead of a lawyer, it was a blow which was felt to the remotest branches of the family. They were so numbed by this that his subsequent marriage to the inconsequent, pretty daughter of a small dry-goods merchant was hardly realised at the time. A Rossiter's wife had never been absolutely put out of the

family, and they did not know how to begin. They greeted her formally when she came back from the wedding journey. None of them had been asked to the wedding, as Maybelle's mother had lately died. But as the months went by, they approved of the marriage less and less, and in the reflection of their disapproval DeLacy came to look upon his pretty, thoughtless little wife in a way which turned her kittenish manners into attempts at dignity, which accentuated her lack of breeding. DeLacy, sour with Rossiter blood, grew to hating everything. He hated the Leftwicks because they were successful and vulgar, and because he, a Rossiter, worked for a self-made man.

Mrs. Leftwick had seen the little wife, and had put out her motherly arms to adopt her into them.

"The pretty little kitten!" she had said, and without waiting for a call, had gone down to Mrs. Billings's boarding-house, where the Rossiters lived, and taken Mrs. Rossiter for a drive in the splendid chariot-like victoria which carried her about. And Maybelle had responded with joy. The shades of social difference were unknown to her. DeLacy Rossiter had married her because he couldn't help it. A philosopher would have said that she was the antidote to the horsehair parlours. He had met her at some semi-public function, and had had no rest

until he married her. Now it seemed that the revolt against the Rossiter traits had been but an ebullition of youth. He regretted his profession, and he lay awake at night and wondered if he regretted his marriage. When morning came, and he saw the peachy face, the little curls, and the pretty smile of Maybelle, he was sure he did not. But lately — she had changed. Sometimes in the morning she looked as though she had not slept. There were dark rings under the blue eyes, and sometimes she had a catch in her voice.

Holly Ainslee had made her one of his jokes since her arrival. For weeks, her poor little mistakes, into which he carefully led her when he could get an audience, had been his chief topic of conversation. They were laughed at by the girls who had always known DeLacy Rossiter, and were still unmarried. As the Rossiters received the bride, they were compelled to do so, in a way, but it was a way which was torture to poor Maybelle. Mrs. Leftwick had seemed a haven of rest to her, but it was one that she enjoyed a very short time.

At dinner that evening Ainslee had commented upon the drive. "Do you know how much Johnny paid for those horses that took you out to-day, Mrs. Rossiter?"

"Why, yes," said innocent Maybelle. "They

came from a famous New York stable. They cost sixteen hundred dollars without a scrap of harness."

And when everybody laughed, she blushed with bewilderment. It was up-stairs after dinner that Rossiter was almost brutal about "that vulgar woman, that washerwoman."

"She's the kindest person I've seen since mamma died."

But DeLacy hardly heard her. He laid down the law that Mrs. Leftwick was not a fit acquaintance for a Rossiter.

So, the day after the church fair, when the new, pale, little Maybelle almost ran up the asphalt walk which led to Mrs. Leftwick's house, she had the look of one who might be dragged back if she were caught.

The house was fairly a-glitter with colour and open fires. Maybelle gasped with the warm, glowing comfort of it, and when Mrs. Leftwick, in a bright blue velveteen tea-gown, came forward and greeted her, her homesick, mother-sick, colour-sick little soul wanted to pour out all its miseries then and there. But there were formalities; and once Maybelle, lost in the maze of her own good manners, was afraid that she must go away without telling what she had come to say. Mrs. Leftwick finally gave her the opening.

"I saw you at the fair last night. I was so glad to see so many there."

"I saw you, too," Maybelle said, "talking to Miss Lily Beale."

"I suppose now, you and your husband are friends of hers. Such a beautiful young lady!"

"No — that is — I reckon Lacy knows her, but — I never met her. She is beautiful, and she looks — kind."

"She's a Christian," said Mrs. Leftwick.

"Do you believe —" Maybelle faltered, "that she has done all those things — cured people and all?"

"I know it."

"Do you think she could cure *anything*?"

"Well, I had rheumatism all over me, an' I was cured by Science."

"But — suppose a person had a lump in their breast," — and Maybelle hurried on, afraid to look at the kind woman before her, — "their mother had died with a" — her breath staggered — "a *cancer*. Could she cure it?"

Kindness is the greatest thing in the world. All real tact must come from a good heart, and Mrs. Leftwick had it.

"I *know* she could," Mrs. Leftwick said, positively. "But I wish't you would go ask her that. Now jes' to please me, I wish't you would. She's so much smarter than an old woman like me. She

could entertain you by the hour — yes, she could! — by just telling you how wonderful Science is; people can be cured of anything, just *anything*. You and her's the same age an' all that, an' you'd enjoy hearin' her. Now, wouldn't you? I'm jest crazy about Science. You two ought-a be friends."

"But I don't know her."

"Well, now, you jest make her acquaintance. I promised to send her a new book I had about Science. Now I'll jest git you to tote it around there," and Mrs. Leftwick put on the glasses she wore on a heavy gold chain, that continually dragged them off, and hunted for the book. Reading was painful to her, but Johnny read to her evenings.

"Oh, *will* you?" said poor Maybelle.

After she had gone Mrs. Leftwick went to the telephone, and called up Judge Beale's house, and told Lily that she was sending a poor little woman to her that had a cancer, and she must get her to tell her about it, so she could cure it. "She's a skeered little lamb," said the "vulgar washerwoman."

CHAPTER XIX.

IT is impossible for any family not to feel something of the strain of even a difference of opinion. There was a reserve through all the Beale household which had never been there before. Up to this time it had been like a well-ordered, pruned, and clipped bush, standing in a prim and dignified fashion in the orderly garden of society. Now it seemed to have suddenly thrown out two unusual branches, and one of them was bearing wonderful, strange blossoms, — poisonous, the parent stem feared.

There must always be between a father and the daughter of a loved wife a bond which even a husband and wife cannot know. In his daughter, a man finds not only the love of his youth, but his own youth come back to him, with all the charm of another sex. Judge Beale had looked at Lily with a tenderness and pride which even he had never fully recognised. She was so exactly the womanly daughter he desired. Her half-maternal care for him, her companionship, had been precious. She had seemed to be wax

in his hands, his creation. It had never occurred to him that she was a fine creature who belonged primarily to herself, and that he was in truth as much her possession as she was his.

The last week had been the hardest he had ever known. He was impatient of it. When he awakened at night, when he was alone on the train on the journey to Maurilla, he had thought of this prickly hedge which had grown up between them as something that a few words could cut down, and that he would do it at the earliest moment. But when the moment came, it was hard to grasp the subject.

Lily and her aunt had had long talks concerning the new difficulty.

"My Lily," her aunt said, "your father's harshness is the result of his love for you. In time he will see the truth, and then he will rejoice as we do. It is for that that we must work."

"Do you think it my duty, Aunt Catherine, to put all this work behind me, to do what my father asks?"

Catherine was tempted to say, "yes," because she was beginning to realise what there was of hostility and opposition for her niece to face. Carefully she explained it to her. Lily listened to her with a faint smile about her sweet young mouth.

"You seem to think that the martyr spirit

died, although the miracles are possible. Where would the Christian religion have been had there been none ready to give up everything to teach it? Oh, why can't people see the simple, reasonable beauty of it all? Why should they protest and fight against what they must see themselves can do no harm in any case? It is all so joyous and so *easy*. I am not different from other people. I have learned a truth which can make us all happy, that is all. I am like one who has been given a treasure to dispense; and they despise it, and ridicule me because of it. Where is the sense of it all? I am bewildered."

"And well you may be." Catherine sat for a little while looking out of the window. It was raining for the moment, the hills across the river were obscured by the mist, and the rain-drops ran down the pane like little silver-mouthed snakes. It would be freezing again in another hour, but now the skies cried as though everything was hopeless.

"I think I shall go to Washington to-morrow to spend Christmas," she went on.

There was a pause, and then Lily said, "Yes, Aunt Cathie."

They did not talk about the prejudice which they could feel was a strain on the family affection. Even warm-hearted Jerry, sore from school experiences which were parting her from "inti-

mate friends," unconsciously showed some of it. With the selfishness of all young things she resented anything that disturbed her little place in the world.

"Will you come?"

"No, Aunt Cathie."

The day before Christmas they all went to the train and saw Cathie installed in the "drawing-room," as the stuffy stateroom on the sleeping-car is seriously named by a nation that calls itself humorous. Her journey was an event. A dozen times they reminded each other of the last time she had started East, and the difference now. It was with difficulty that her brother was prevented from accompanying her, and only the impossibility of getting back for Christmas at home prevented him.

So they piled the seats with flowers and books, and reminded her that her presents were in a certain trunk, kissed her good-bye, and stood watching the Pullman go by, with the gay, pretty face at the window, a little wistful after all, at leaving them.

"Think of *Cathie*, going off alone," her brother said. "Isn't it amazing!" as they turned back. Lily opened her lips, and then wisely closed them again.

Dinner and supper seemed lonely meals with Cathie's chair empty, but some restraint was over,

and after they left the dining-room that evening her father asked Lily if she would sing for him. There was a piano in the Judge's "study," a room where he was supposed to do the work that he brought home with him from the office. It had been an architect's adjunct to the new house, along with the conservatory.

In the new houses in Stevensburg, the old-fashioned Southern sitting-room had given way to a "library." These libraries were generally solemn, dark rooms, with tapestry paper, a bulky centre-table, on which lay the heavier magazines, if the family was well enough instructed to know them, and a bookcase containing an encyclopedia and the works of some of the standard authors. Many an edition of Scott and Dickens (who head the list of favourites in these libraries) had been purchased when the new houses were furnished. The library at the Beales' was a little better. Many of the family books were at Judge Beale's office, where the accumulation of three generations of educated men lined the walls from floor to ceiling. Mrs. Glover had carried away such as she could of the home books. The Beale women had never been literary in their tastes. They were educated after the fashion of their times, but they were fonder of a social than a bookish life. And so, in this household the

library was a sort of back parlour, and Judge Beale's "den" the real sitting-room.

The house was all flavoured with Christmas from top to bottom. Jack and Jerry had gone to the Glovers', where they were to help their young cousins trim a tree and fill stockings for still younger ones. Mrs. Beale was busy over her last presents, and the shadow that had been on the house seemed to have evaporated. Only the little room seemed remote.

Lily whirled the piano-stool, and went over the songs on the piano.

"Here," she said, "are all the old ones and some of the new ones. What shall it be, Daddy-kins?" Her voice was as gay and light as ever. There were no mournful numbers on Lily's tongue. She had always been gay and happy. Now that she felt within her the solution to all misery, sometimes she was almost intoxicated with joy. To her, "God is in his heaven, all's right with the world." Her father's harshness she knew to be merely the result of a mistake. It could be nothing else, and that, she felt sure, time would remove.

The Judge heard her with an indescribable relief. The stone on his heart seemed to melt. He associated a firm religious conviction with solemn voice and "preachiness." Now Cathie was gone, Lily would forget or forego her nonsense.

Lily hunted up one of his favourites, and her strong, practised fingers came down on the keys with almost a professional touch. The Beales did everything they undertook in a finished manner. They made no pretensions at trying everything or knowing everything. Lily could not make renaissance lace, or embroider centre-pieces, but she could make a capital shirtwaist, cook anything, and her fine contralto voice was charmingly cultivated. She had not only a good finish to her work, but that rarer thing, taste. It was always a surprise to find that this willowy blonde girl with the gentle eyes had a powerful deep contralto voice. It surprised the listener into a thrill.

Now she sang Schubert's arrangement of "Silvia" from "Two Gentlemen of Verona," and as the words left her lips her father thought proudly, as he had thought when he first heard her sing it, that his daughter might have stood the poet's model.

"Who is Silvia? What is she,
That all our swains commend her?
Holy, fair, and wise is she,
The heaven such grace did lend her,
That she might admirèd be.

"Is she kind as she is fair?
For beauty lives with kindness:
Love doth to her eyes repair,

To help him of his blindness:
And being helped, inhabits there.

“Then to Silvia let us sing
That Silvia is excelling:
She excells each mortal thing
Upon the dull earth dwelling:
To her, let us garlands bring.”

“My hands are cold. The gas has not been lighted here long enough,” Lily cried, when she had finished, and she ran over to warm them at the fire. Her father took her hand as she attempted to rise from the hearth, and drew her on to the broad arm of the chair beside him, with his arm about her waist. She had been working in the afternoon over the fair débris, and had not changed her short skirt, which came about her ankles, but her heavy shoes had come off for a dainty pair of slippers, coquettishly tied with ribbon bows. In her white blouse she was like a child of fifteen. She put her cheek against her father’s hair, and with an arm around his neck, gently crooned. It was a delicious trick which had lasted over from her babyhood.

“Is she kind as she is fair?
For beauty lives with kindness,”

Judge Beale quoted. “I am afraid this Silvia is being a little unkind.”

Lily stopped the crooning, but did not move.

"There was a young man whom I respect and like, whom I may say I love as my own son, came to me not long ago. He wanted to know if I believed my daughter could love him too."

Lily sat rigid.

"My dear child," the father said, tenderly, holding her close to his side, "I would not go too deep into your heart. There is a holy of holies in every girl's heart where only one should ever penetrate, and that is the man to whom her life is joined. I am old-fashioned in my beliefs, but they come from the solemnest convictions. Marriage is the greatest of mysteries, the holiest thing in our lives. If it is rightly made, two become literally one person. I want you to have that perfection of your being, but I would rather see you dead than the wife of a man who did not bring you the complement of your own nature, the man you love above all the world. I have thought you did care for Henry Richards, and, my darling, I do not want a mistake to part you if that is so."

"A woman can only be sure that — that" — Lily half lost her breath — "another is the same to her as herself, if they feel alike, sympathise with each other."

"And you think," there was an imperceptible change in the Judge's voice, still tender, but with something left out that his daughter felt, "that

the man should always give up to the woman's feelings? Is it not her duty to give in too?"

"Yes, in all little things, perhaps in great ones, after they are married, but isn't love sometimes a blind guide, father? You know it is. There must be no question of 'duty.' A man and woman should understand each other, must want to understand each other." Lily's voice had grown stronger.

"Truly," her father said, "and a woman should recognise the superior means of understanding of a man, that whatever he does is done out of tenderness and consideration for her. That is the attitude of a good man toward his wife."

"Father, I am stronger and better because I have known Doctor Richards. I do love him, but I love him so much that I want us to be in perfect accord, when that great mystery comes to us. If it is not real, if we are not for each other, we shall discover it now. And that were better."

The Judge's voice was almost cold now. "Do you expect Richards, who has spent years in learning the science of our bodies and our minds, who *knows*, by experiment and research, to give up his work and listen to sentimental follies?" Lily drew away.

"I expect the man who loves me to believe

that I speak the truth. I have been able by God's power to do what no human being alone could do. I have seen the wonder, as you have seen it. I know it is not a sentimental folly." She put her arm around her father's neck again and held him. "Dear father, please open your eyes and your heart, and *see*. It is as blind in you as though you believed that that spark of electricity in that globe there was something all alone by itself, and not a part of a great current. It is so wonderful to *know*."

The door opened abruptly, and Mrs. Longmore stood on the threshold. A black scarf was over her head, and her face was pale.

"Lily," she said, "come home with me. Robert needs you. He is afraid."

Judge Beale sprang to his feet, and stood between his daughter and the visitor.

"I am sorry," he said, "but Lily cannot go with you."

"Roger, I beg you," the mother plead. "He was so sure, and now he is no longer sure. All of us — you — everybody has told him that it was not true, and the old demon has clutched at him again when he began to doubt."

"The old demon that is your son's sad inheritance has clutched him. Let him be man enough to conquer, or man enough to suffer without drag-

ging a young girl into his miseries. If he had not fed his demon, it would not be so strong. My daughter is nothing to him." Judge Beale felt his heart pump the blood to his head. He was so angry that he wanted to strike.

"In the name of your own son, in the name of *God*, Roger Beale, I ask you let her come and save my son if she can."

"She cannot."

Lily had stood beside him, listening, her eyes large and dark with feeling. Pity, love for the poor mother irradiated her face. She moved now, and went into the hall, and a moment later she took Mrs. Longmore by the arm.

"Come with me," she said, gently. She had a cloak and hat on.

Judge Beale strode toward her.

"You shall not go," he said.

"I must, I will."

"If you disobey me, if you leave my house against my will, you shall not enter it again," he cried, beside himself. The words were meaningless to him at the moment. He wished only to say the one thing which would stop her. This folly should be ended here and now.

For answer, Lily looked into his face, while the sorrow of the world was born in her eyes. Then she turned, and went out of the door.

“Roger, what have you said!” Mrs. Longmore cried.

“Damn your son!” he cried, in his rage and grief.

CHAPTER XX.

AS they came out on to the uneven brick pavement, glistening with frost under the big swinging crane of the electric lamps which disfigured the town, Mrs. Longmore instinctively looked at Lily's lightly clad feet. Habits of thought and speech make it possible for us to live through the hard places in life. They move us along mechanically when blows would paralyse us otherwise, and leave us by the roadside.

"You will catch cold," she murmured.

And Lily, just turned from her father's door, her heart bursting with the impossible idea which was trying to enter there, laughed almost joyously. And in that sudden realisation which brought her laugh, the whole universe adjusted itself anew.

"Dear Mrs. Longmore," she said, and she put her arm through that of the elder woman. "How could I catch cold? My best story-book when I was a child was a 'Pilgrim's Progress,' arranged for children. It had an enormous picture of the

lions that frightened poor Pilgrim, until he found out that they were chained. I think they are like diseases, except that of course the diseases are not even real enough to be chained. They are just — well, optical illusions.”

Mrs. Longmore listened to the girl in astonishment. Instead of the stern creature who could defy her father, leaving his house in the face of a terrible threat, going to help a man who had just received that father's curse, that she had expected to meet; here, walking happily beside her, was the same Lily she had known every day of her girlhood. There was not a tremor in the girlish voice, not a note of anything but joy and sweetness.

As Mrs. Longmore had followed Lily, it had been with almost the intention of asking her to return. She was a conscientious woman, and she felt that she had no right to make this breach between father and child. She was shocked and bewildered, taken from her usual poise. She was tremblingly trying in the first steps to frame the words that would send Lily back, even though it killed her own hope. She had the instinctive feeling that after all it was the girl who should be spared everything. Men, even her own son, must suffer perdition, if perdition were necessary, to that end. As she heard Lily laugh, and the even, every-day tones, she wondered at first if the child had heard

what her father had said. Then she remembered that pause, and the consternation that had swept over her, washing away in its chill the vivid sense of her own present need.

Yes, Lily knew. And then, conventionality holding her, Mrs. Longmore wondered if — All at once her errand seemed useless. Could it be possible that, after all, as some people had said these last days, this young girl was only a bit of light vanity, the sort of girl who liked to play upon the credulity of the simple, or upon any other instrument which would sound her name before the public? Mrs. Longmore lived a life of retirement, but she knew that girls like that existed, though Stevensburg had produced none as yet. She had seen their pictures and their names in the Sunday papers. Some of them were of as delicate a beauty and as gentle breeding as Lily Beale.

Mrs. Longmore stopped in sudden distaste and took Lily's arm from her own. Her voice had lost the ring of feeling. It was the colourless voice of every day.

"Do you think it right to disobey your father? I think I should urge you to return. Come, I will take you back." The long street whose trees were so thick along the pavement that even their bare branches shaded it, lay silent and empty, the electric globes hanging out over it at inter-

vals and covering it with a network of deep shadows.

"No," Lily said. "I am doing the thing I have been given the power to do. It isn't mine, this power. I am simply an instrument to be used. I don't know why I was selected without the study for it, but I cannot be faithless to it. And" — she turned her face toward Mrs. Longmore as they went under the light; it was as sweet as a little child's, with a beauty so tender, so perfect, that Mrs. Longmore felt as rebuked for her suspicions as though an angel had looked into her face — "everything will be all right. My father will see. There is nothing can make any difference, really." She put her arm through Mrs. Longmore's again. "That is the beautiful part of understanding, — *nothing can make any difference!* When you understand, you know that you are a part of God's spiritual and eternal universe. You are own kin to the stars up there. The Life pulses through all of us. That is what it means when they teach us that we are all as brothers. We are closer than any twins. It is possible" — she spoke slowly now, as one who was realising what she said as she shaped it into words — "to make that Life felt from one of us to another. Why, even material science does that with material steel instruments, and yet we deny

the power to our own souls, the most delicate instruments — on the very current of Life itself." She paused for a moment.

Mrs. Longmore, timid, unused to being on the streets of even the little town alone, turned nervously. It seemed to her that some one was following them, — some one who had followed all the way, hanging back in the shadow of the trees.

"We should not have come out alone."

"What can harm us? We are absolutely safe anywhere — if we only know it. Just as safe as the air or the sea. Dear father! He hurts himself, but then I know that it cannot be very much after all." She laughed again. "Do you know how I feel? Almost as though I could fly. You know that if we really wanted to, and insisted upon it, we could — after some generations. It seems to me that every hour of the day since Aunt Cathie came home and told me the wonderful thing, showed it to me, that I keep saying to myself that we must have been blind not to have seen it before. Why, we learned it at school — really. How did birds ever come to be birds instead of fishes and reptiles? By believing that they could fly and trying it. Everything in the universe, the trees, the animals, everything — expresses the Creator's mind in some form or other. But we are identities of the very soul of the uni-

verse. It is so beautiful." She fairly breathed the last words.

Mrs. Longmore drew a long sigh. "I wouldn't say those things to Robert. I think —" she faltered, "he would not understand."

"That is exactly what he shall understand," Lily cried, as she ran up the dark steps. "I think he does now."

The old Longmore house seemed to have taken on some of the characteristics of its inhabitants. Its brick walls were vine-covered and dark, and the veranda was like a cavern. They rang the bell. Mrs. Longmore had the key in her pocket, but she wanted to give Robert warning that she was coming. She wondered if he would be there. He had promised, but she knew what it was to see the man she should have trusted false to a promise when that demon drove him, — false to everything, through no will of his own. It is as though when a man gives up the doorway of his soul to that form of evil, he is cynically driven to seek what he most despises, as though the fiend would show its power.

"Hurry, oh, hurry!" the poor mother said, under her breath, fearing, wondering, trembling as only a mother can fear and tremble and hope. A wife may love as much, but she has what she calls her "pride" to sustain her. But to a mother the loss of her one child is like the loss of her

own heart. There can be nothing built on the ruins. She shivered as with the cold.

Lily touched her hand, and on her face Mrs. Longmore saw again that lovely look.

"Do not be afraid. There was no need to hurry. All the way I have known it. He is all right."

There was a quick manly step in the hall. Mrs. Longmore's heart bounded. She remembered the haggard, weak creature, crouched in his chair, holding on to the arms of it as though he would keep himself from collapse, that she had left behind her, — a creature whose hollow, burning eyes had seemed to beseech her to bring him the one thing which would relieve his torment, or the one human being who had saved him before. And going, running through the streets as one who saw a loved one mortally wounded would run for the surgeon who might tie the artery and save him, she had gone for Lily, with alternate hope and despair. When she heard that step she felt that there could be but one explanation. He had brought himself out of his horror by the road which would bring him deeper into it again. She staggered against the doorpost, afraid to see his face when he appeared. Lily held her, and when Longmore opened the door, she said, calmly, "I think your mother would like you to help her to the fire."

When Mrs. Longmore felt the strong, tender arm of her son about her, stronger and tenderer than she had ever known it before, it seemed to her, she looked up at him almost timidly. It was to meet a new man, — a strong man, whose face was pale, but tense with purpose, and calm with certainty.

“Oh, Robert!” she said.

“It is all right, mother. It is never going to be wrong any more. I understand at last. You brought me the help as soon as you reached it. There — there —” The man’s heavy voice was sweet with tenderness, and with the power that made his mother know that he had come into his kingdom. She was crying and sobbing on his shoulder — after all these years, daring at last to be just a weak woman, with tears to shed.

CHAPTER XXI.

LILY slipped away and left them. She wanted solitude to enjoy the happiness that was hers as well as theirs. If she had suddenly been able to fly she would have felt no more exaltation and delight than swept through her being, as she walked up and down the veranda. She threw her cloak back and drew long breaths. The dead branches of the Virginia creeper rattled against the old-fashioned iron lattice-posts, but it might have been June for all Lily cared.

Inside Mrs. Longmore was crying all the tears she had kept back for thirty years, watering her dry heart, becoming a woman again, coming back into her birthright of being cared for and protected and comforted.

"She said — Robert, Lily said it was possible for one mind to come to another over any distance." She was full of the joy and wonder of this thing that had been done. There would never be any more doubts for her. She knew. She knew as soon as she saw that strong, new

face of her son. It was the face she had dreamed over his cradle that he would wear when he came to man's estate. It was the face of his father with something in it which his father had never had. The wonderful strength and poise of perfect self-control. Doubt? She could no more doubt this man and believe him capable of going back to the horror of what was past, than that he could go back and be a helpless baby in her arms again. Every fibre of her being recognised the new man that had come, when she first saw his face. It was so certain, so real, so natural, that by to-morrow she would have almost forgotten that he had ever been any other than what he now was. This was the real Robert. This was her boy. Life, that had been so dreadful, so colourless, so easy to leave, except that if she went there would be left behind her one who was helpless, and whom her mother soul anguished over, became in the moment brilliant, happy, full. Why, in the space of an hour — of a moment, it seemed — she had become a happy woman! What was there in the world she desired? She had it all, and as she thought of it, she cried and cried again. Not the tears of sorrow, slow dropping, not the deep sobs of bereavement, and not the excited tears which we call tears of joy. But the breath-catching, almost childish crying of a woman who can afford "a good cry," because

she knows that she will be soothed and hushed and sheltered against her own mood. It is only a happy woman who ever dares "have a good cry."

And Robert held her relaxed figure against his arm, and patted her head and talked and told her to "bear up," as though he had been doing that thing all his life, because the instinct to comfort is born in every decent man. And in these minutes, as subtly as a chemical change, all their old life melted and formed again in new crystals, that would harden to last all their lives long.

Outside Lily walked up and down. Suddenly she stopped. A shadow had crept up under the trees and under the vines. She looked closer and saw that a man, a poor, shambling creature, was standing by the vines, not as though he intended to enter, but as though in hiding.

She stopped opposite him and then said, gently:

"Do you want something?"

"Ain't you Judge Beale's girl?" he asked, uncouthly.

"Yes."

"I seed ye' come out o' thar. Yer paw, he don't think much o' my folks." He stopped and cleared his throat in embarrassment. Lily waited.

"My ole man, mebbe you've hearn about it. He's Lige Sawyer. Yer paw had to send him up

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oncet. He said some purty hard things 'bout th' other boys an' me. He don' think much o' us noways."

"Can I do anything for you?" Lily asked, gently. Like everybody else born and bred in Stevensburg, she knew of the Sawyer family.

"I ain't sure," Jake said, hesitatingly now. "Mebbe you've hearn tell o' my ole woman, Lyddy Sawyer. Lyddy, she's" — he stumbled over words to express the differences of Lyddy. — "she's sort o' stuck-up. She washes an' house-cleans fer you'all people sometimes." He spoke with pride. To come as near respectability as to work in any capacity in one of the "big houses" of the town was more than any other Sawyer had achieved. "She's a member o' th' Baptis' church," he added, "but I ain't seed it done her no good."

"Does she need something?" Lily asked.

"No'm. She don't; but we got a mighty sick young 'un, now —" He stopped again, and it seemed difficult for him to go on. "I got Doc Clay t' come over an' see him, an' *he* says —" He stopped again. "I don' think much o' them docs, nohow. I wouldn't trust 'em."

"What does he say?" Lily asked.

"He says th' young 'un's got diphtery — an' won't live 'til mornin'." He brought the words out with a rush, and the rest tumbled after them.

"I hearn about what you bin doin', an' I thought mebbe, *mebbe* —"

"I will come with you at once," Lily said. She walked lightly to the door and opened it.

"Good night," she called, cheerily, "I am going."

Robert went rapidly to the door, while his mother followed.

"Where are you going? Let me get my coat. You can't go alone."

"But —" Mrs. Longmore hesitated. "You are going to stay all night. I feel as though I could never let you go home again." Her face was transfigured. Her heavy hair was pushed back from her forehead, and she looked years younger, although her eyes and nose were red. So, too, were her cheeks.

"A man is here who wants me to go and see his baby, who has diphtheria."

Mrs. Longmore gave a cry of consternation.

"Diphtheria! Lily, you can't go to diphtheria!"

Lily and Robert both laughed. It did his mother good to hear it. It was laughter, healthy laughter of her son, mingled with the joy of his own kind, that her ears had been hungry for.

"Where is it? I will go with you," Robert said.

"This is Mr. Sawyer —"

Robert came out and looked at the man keenly.

"Is that you, Jake?" he asked.

"Yes, Mr. Longmore. An' 'fore God —"

"That will do. What did you ask Miss Beale to do?"

"Doc Clay says my kid's a-dyin'," he said, huskily.

"Do you live in the Camp?"

"Yes'ir."

"Well, you go home as fast as you can, and tell them the kid won't die. I'll bring Miss Beale in my buggy. Go along."

"I must go with you," Mrs. Longmore said, firmly.

"Indeed, you cannot, mother. You get Lily wrapped up, and get some soup in cans and some food for those poor devils. Three of us can't go in the buggy. I'll take care of Lily."

"What will your mother say?" Mrs. Longmore protested. Those tears had watered the soil out of which already pride in her son was growing. But she must remember yet that he had not been a proper escort for a young girl, that Lily Beale's very society had been denied him.

"Nothing, surely, when she knows why I went."

The climate in the Ohio valley is erratic. The snow had melted from the ground long ago, and had been succeeded by a distressing warmth. To-

day had been frosty again, but the thermometer was rising minute by minute, and as Robert lifted Lily into the light buggy, the air came into their faces with almost a suggestion of spring.

"I thought it was cold," he said. "The air in the stables was cold." He had harnessed the horse himself, as the coachman's duties were supposed to be over at dusk. "But out here it is like spring. Do you make your own weather, too? I believe you could. Isn't there some story about a saint who made roses grow out of the snow?"

"In a climate that I have known to change fifty degrees in three hours, even that seems possible," Lily said, lightly.

"I wonder," Longmore said, "if those saints the Catholics tell such wonderful stories of, were like you. They must have been. I feel so ashamed of myself — of my ignorance, my stupidity. I don't suppose that side of what you are doing, what you have done for me — will appeal to you."

He was talking in a quite commonplace, ordinary way. The thing which had happened to him was too great for exclamations, for thanks. He would as soon have thought of giving formal thanks to his mother for having brought him into the world, as to Lily for what she had done for him.

"But I have prided myself upon just one thing. Open-mindedness to the world. I have piled my library with the expoundings of every scientific theory. I have even gone to Washington to see that psychological laboratory where fine machines prove how inadequate our poor, pitiful little five senses are to give us any real notion of the laws of our existence. What are our bodies, anyway, but pieces of the dull earth blundering about? I understood that long ago. I have sat and smiled at our own impotence to understand what our poor dull senses could not comprehend. And all the time, I suppose, in some places ever since the coming of Christ, people have known that there was no limit to what we could comprehend. We have in ourselves — everything. The amazing thing to me is — now — that we had not even curiosity. While I was learning all about wireless telegraphy, I was sneering at the greatest science of all, — the only one."

"Do you feel like that?" Lily asked. "It fills me with amazement every hour. I want to get on to the very housetops and tell them. I have never dared say so before, but even that newspaper notoriety that has nearly broken mother's heart was only painful to me on that account. Suppose it set even one person to thinking, sent one poor suffering creature to the place

where he could be made well and happy, wasn't it worth it all?"

"You are a saint," Longmore said. "The *Maurilla Question* is unspeakable."

Stevensburg is built on the hills above the Ohio River, with "the Tracks" and the settlements of "poor white trash" on the meadows below. Winding along at the foot of the first hill on the first terrace in the stairsteps of hills was Bronson Avenue. It was one of the oldest streets in the town, for it had originally been a country road leading into town. Of late years the farmers had gone another way, and it had been left lonely, except for the driving and walking here in its tree-shaded dusk on summer evenings.

On one side it shelved abruptly down to the swampy meadows, which began two or three acres away to be dotted by the cabins around and over "the Tracks," stretching away beyond the town in straggling groups. Farther out the houses became village-like, homes of respectable workmen who wanted neat houses and gardens of their own, and could not afford them in the growing town.

On the upper side of the avenue was an abrupt hill for most of its length, on which sat a few of the handsome homes of the town. But Bronson Avenue was very lonely at night in the win-

ter, and after the boys and girls whose first love-making was chance pairings on summer evening walks, had gone home. And there had grown up in the gossip of the town, a more or less unpleasant reputation for its night quiet.

Any town the size of Stevensburg seems necessarily a hotbed of gossip. There is too little diversion for the half-educated, and they fall to noticing the indiscretions of their neighbours, and trying to make themselves interesting by reciting them. In the old Stevensburg days there had been a certain formal village dignity. The "quality" of those old days had held themselves as a class apart, and whatever their men or even their women had done, had been held within their own order. No servant, however privileged, would have dared discuss an indiscretion. People were supposed to know how to order their own affairs, and ladies of breeding held it an offence to their sense of delicacy to have a story at all suggestive of impropriety told to them. This was still true of some of the older homes, and the Beales' was one of them. But since the coming of the "new people," and particularly since Mrs. Feeley's diplomatic dissemination of soiled ideas, the whole atmosphere of the social life had been changed. As a direct result both men and women, constantly hearing unclean tales about each other, began to think of not so much consequence,

and the very tales themselves bred new cause for scandals. In some of these, Bronson Avenue had figured. It was a romantic place for silly, indiscreet meetings, and had been a little shunned on that account. Neither Lily Beale nor Longmore had ever heard these tales, and in their present state of mind, neither of them would have thought of it if they had, and when the buggy whirled into Bronson Avenue on its way to the "Camp of the Israelites," they saw only a long, empty street, which would speedily bring them to their destination.

But Holly Ainslee, with his armload of music, on his way to practise Christmas anthems for the next morning, looked up from the tree-shaded sidewalk and saw Lily Beale out driving after dark with Bob Longmore on Bronson Avenue, and his parchment-like skin wrinkled itself into a smile of perfect delight.

CHAPTER XXII.

“**H**OW do we get through here? We seem to have reached the end of the road.”

Longmore drew up the horse and looked over toward the Camp, huddled in the wet field, a dim light here and there showing the squalid window in front of it. The clouds which were accompanying the coming warm weather, obscured the moon and left a half-light, which enabled them to see the rotting fence-posts holding crooked planks just sufficient to prevent their driving through.

They drove along slowly, and Jake Sawyer suddenly arose, causing the nervous horse to spring sidewise.

“Hyar’s th’ bars,” he said.

He walked along beside them as they drove over the field.

“I ain’t said you was comin’,” he said to Lily. “’Twouldn’t do no good, noways. Ef ye’ cud just — Well, ye’ll know when ye’ see th’ kid. Mis’ Smoot she tole me how you done it fer her young ’un. She lived over here a piece.

Lyddy, she don' onderstan' these things." Jake was growing garrulous. He felt important that he had actually spoken to and brought down here with him the very cream of the "quality," and a woman whose name had been in the newspapers.

"She don' think much o' doctors, Lyddy don'. No more'n you do. When I went over town to git a doctor, some uv 'em says t' me, says they, 'Git Doc Richards, he's th' best uv 'em.' But 'No,' says I. I read what was writ in th' papers by you" (evidently Jake thought Lily had sent in the interview) "bout 'em bein' murderers. An' thinks I, ef I git th' best uv 'em, it'll be th' biggest killer. An' I moseyed 'round an' got Doc Clay. I reasoned out that ef he couldn't do much one way, he couldn't th' other."

Lily opened her mouth to speak. The very sound of Richards's name sent the blood over her face, and tingling along the backs of her hands. She knew that this man had mentioned him with the wish to ingratiate himself. He believed the stories he had read and heard. Longmore gently put his hand on hers for silence.

Jake led them past the other houses to his own at the end of the row. He knew that it was unwise, but he wanted his relations to see the wonderful thing he had done. It would make the camp famous for ever.

Mrs. Smoot had been the envied of all "Over-the-Tracks" before she had had her doctor's bill paid and gone away to the country with her child. There were some doubters, and the Sawyers fluctuated. One day their superstitious souls believed anything that was told them, and the next, they flung out cynical laughter. They finally settled down to the belief that Lily had cured the child, not by any grace or power, except that she was "quality," and quality's touch was an old and well-known cure for king's evil.

Only Lyddy honestly disbelieved. Her visit to her pastor had left her in terror. She had tried to tell her people about it, but she might as easily have tried to interest them in the Rossetta Stone. They laughed aloud at Mr. Batton's objections. Preachers objected to everything that was interesting.

On Lyddy's heart the preacher's words had printed themselves. What was stealing a few pigs to the enormity of the offence of this Beale girl? And yet her father-in-law was in the penitentiary, and the Beale girl was "quality."

When the buggy stopped and Lily alighted she was speedily surrounded. The sisters-in-law, some of them dragging a child that could not be left at home, pushed by her and into Jake's cabin. Although the doctor had told them that the dis-

ease was diphtheria and contagious, they paid no attention.

Old Mrs. Sawyer, the mother of the "Israelites," sat by the broken clothes-basket in which Lyddy's child lay, on as soft a bed as the mother could contrive, and gave out wisdom.

"No one ain't never hearn o' sore throat bein' ketchin'. 'Tain't nothin' but a kine o' croup, noways. Doc says he'll choke t' death," she added, calmly, and fumbled in her pocket for her pipe, which she lighted. "A leetle smoke'll clear out his head, likely."

Lyddy, crouched on the floor beside the basket, shook at the words. She had heard the doctor say that, and it had seemed to her ever since that every laboured breath of the child was tearing her heart. She had more imagination than the rest of them, inheritance of her life in the hills, and of the rude Bible talks of the preacher-shoemaker.

The miserable room in which the curious-eyed, half-dressed women made way for Lily, was the only one in the house except for a floorless shed in which Lyddy did her washing. The only fire was in a battered cooking-stove, on which sat pans of half-dried poultices. One of them, concocted by the old mother, had the blood of a black rooster and some hairs from a rabbit's foot among its other ingredients.

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Behind were two beds, in one of which the elder children slept. The room was fairly clean, considering its impossibilities, but through it all was the odour of wet leather, hops, acrid medicines, and tobacco. For one second, still shaken a little by that reference to Richards, the habits of years caught Lily, and she felt faint. Then, brought to herself by the momentary weakness, she drew a long breath and the strength of the very universe with it.

The tremendous news that the miracle-worker who was said to have cured the Smoot child was here, was all through the Camp. Most of them had finally concluded that the cure had been a "fake" after all, because the mother had taken the child away. She was probably ashamed of the reappearance of the sickness, and the consequent jeers.

At first Lyddy had no idea who her visitor was. If she thought at all, it was that some of the ladies from the "Baptis'" church may have heard of the baby's illness and come to help her.

She rose to her feet unsteadily, wishing that her sisters-in-law wouldn't crowd and stare like that, and looked about for a chair.

Lily leaned down over the old clothes-basket in which the child lay gasping.

"He's a-dyin' right now," said the old grand-

mother. "He's a-passin', but it's likely some breath'll stay 'til th' turn o' th' night."

"It seems to me," poor Lyddy said, "I kin stan' *anythin'* ef he jes' don' *choke*." Lines of agony were in her thin face. Lily put out her arms to take the child.

"He will not choke," she said, "he will get well. You must not be frightened. You are frightening him."

There was a scuffle in the room behind her. Two angry women were fighting.

"Stop a-pushin' me, Jin Sawyer. I've got jes' as good a right here as you hev. I'm go'n'-a see her do her hocus-pocus."

The answer of the other was to give her a push which sent her reeling against the door.

"Abe, Abe!" the other called, "come yer', an' knock this cuss of a Jin Sawyer."

Lily looked up from the child, startled.

"Oh, please be quiet," she said.

"There! I bet she's done it, an' I ain't seed a thing! Lyddy, don't you let her do nothin' to the kid 'til I see her do it. They say they change right 'fore your eyes." Lyddy looked from them to Lily, and bewilderment changed some of the horror and grief in her face.

Abe had come to the door now, in answer to the call of his mate.

"The Beale girl's here, the one that lays on han's, an' Jin won't let me near enough to see."

Lyddy gave a cry and sprang for her child and held it in her arms.

"Git out o' here!" she said, standing tense with the spirit of defence. "I know you. Here I've been a-prayin' an' a-prayin', an' you come here an' set 'em all back."

"Please let me tell you. Please let me take the baby. We can make him well. There is no need for him to be sick. Send these people away. If you have been praying, I can make you help me cure the baby."

There was something in the sweet voice which touched Lyddy's heart. She had one dreadful second of thinking that if this woman could save the baby, keep it from that awful choking which made her grind her own teeth in agony when she saw and heard it, she wouldn't care if she were the Scarlet Woman herself.

None of them had heard the sound of another buggy which had driven up over the fields, and stopped outside. From it laboriously alighted a short, fat man with glasses, and a shock of untidy black hair pushed from under a silk hat, grotesque with the fashion of five years ago and the wear of time. He looked curiously at Jake standing by Longmore's side, and more curiously at Long-

more. That he had been drinking was evident even before he spoke.

"Hello, Jake," he said, "you in trouble? Seein' your lawyer?"

Jake turned over in his mind how he was to prevent the doctor going in until the miracle had been worked, or until the trial had been made. In his heart he was so much elated over the event of Lily's coming that the object seemed of small importance. He was fond of the baby, and Lyddy was "stuck on th' kid," and he hoped it would be cured.

"Mist' Longmore an' me wuz jest discussin' a little politics," Jake said. "I tole him he ought to run fer sheriff. We need a high-toned sheriff in th' county, — some tony up-an'-comer thet'll git *rispec'*."

Sheriff was to Jake and his class the highest office. There was some talk around town, of course, of Congressmen and Senators, but he didn't understand much about them. They did not usually come from Stevensburg, and for aught he knew, no Stevensburger was eligible. These great honours were for "way-off people." The doctor laughed in a way that made Longmore's eyebrows draw together.

"Ya'as," he drawled, "we do need a sheriff that will get respect. And so Mr. Longmore

thinks he can fill the bill? Is he thinkin' o' runnin' on the Prohibition ticket?"

"No. Nor any other ticket," Longmore said, quietly. "Although I believe I am in favour of prohibition. If men haven't sense enough to keep sober when they go about their business, it might be just as well for the law to demand it."

"Eh? *Eh?*" Clay said, squaring his bulky body and pushing the hat back. "You're a fine one to be makin' reflections upon a gentleman." He measured Longmore and concluded that he wouldn't go too far. He drew himself up with a pretence of dignity. "If I hadn't a patient inside, I'd tell you what I thought of you dudes — that" — he hesitated again — "castin' aspersions upon a professional man and a gentleman in the pursuit of his sacred duty." Turning to Jake, he said, "How is the child?" and started tottering toward the open doorway.

"What are all that gang doin' in there?" he yelled, when he caught sight of the crowded women and children. "Didn't I tell you that they'd start a diphtheria epidemic in this town if they didn't keep away from here? I'll tell you what *I'll* do." He shook his finger in Jake's face. All the anger of his drink, all the anger at Longmore, whom he hated as belonging to another order, came out. "I'll have your confounded kid at the pest-house in less than two hours. I know

my duty to this community." He started to enter the door, where some of the women were looking out now. They were crazy with the excitement, and called out to each other.

"Come on in, Doc, or th' Beale girl'll git yer patient," Abe's wife cried. "Lyddy's lettin' her have him."

"Stop a moment," Longmore said, putting his hand on the man's shoulder, "I do not believe that you are able to know your duty just now. Your patient is in good hands. Suppose you leave him there for a little while."

But Clay had heard the name which was like the red cloak to the bull. He tore himself away, and dashed into the house just as Lily was holding out her arms, pleading amid all the confusion for the child.

"The baby will get well. Let me take him," she said.

"Fool!" Clay took Lyddy by the arm. "Do you want this lunatic to kill your child?" He snatched the gasping baby, and pushed Lily away. "What do you mean by letting this crank touch a patient of mine?" he said to poor Lyddy. "I'll take this child to the pest-house, that's what I'll do."

The baby gave a gasp, tried to lift its poor little body in the struggle for breath, and fell back.

Lyddy gave a scream.

"Give him to me! Give him to me!"

"Ef you take him to th' pest-house, it'll be a corpse," the old grandmother said, calmly.

The women broke out, half sorry, half triumphant, "Th' baby's dead!" "Ah-h, it's all a fake. She can't do nothin'. I tole ye' so."

Clay stood among them. "Let me see you get a death certificate out o' me, will you? This thing's got to be investigated. I thought I'd get these Christian Scientists where I wanted 'em."

CHAPTER XXIII.

MRS. BEALE came down-stairs later than her usual bedtime to say a last word about the presents of the children, and to make the transparent device of receiving her own presents as a surprise easier to carry out. Jack and Jerry were up-stairs arranging their packages now, having come home in the wild excitement which the smell of Christmas greens seems to give the young.

“Why, where is Lily?” she asked, as she saw her husband sitting alone by the fire.

Now, the Judge had gone through every phase of feeling since his temper had gotten the best of him in his flare at Lily. He had begun by saying to himself that he would stand by what he had said. If his daughter had defied him, she should take the consequences. He had told her what they were — what would happen if she went against his wishes, his commands — and she had gone. Roger Beale was not a sentimental man, except as every man has that overripening of sentiment which we call sentimentalism, concern-

ing his own loved womankind. We Americans are apt to think that it is a characteristic peculiar to ourselves. It is one we more or less plume ourselves upon. It is our pleased recognition of it in ourselves which causes us to smile fatuously when foreigners say we spoil our women. As a matter of fact, the trait is merely one of human civilisation, common to all people who know affection.

Then Judge Beale sat over the fire and ran down the scale. For a little while he would have been pleased to think of himself as a deserted father, sitting there until the fire turned to ashes, forlorn and cold. He did not formulate this thought. He would have been disgusted at the idea of entertaining it, could he have seen it in his consciousness, but he felt a new resentment against gas and asbestos logs that would go on in a gay acting of a freshly lighted fire until the force was turned off, no matter what the stress of the man who sat over it.

His severity was obliged to evaporate. All his Virginian ancestors, his life, his times, had taken the backbone out of the sort of rage which made a father order his daughter from his house. After his various moods, he came at last to the one where he asked himself what he was going to say to his daughter when she came home. He was startled by the entrance of his wife, and he

arose hastily and looked at the clock. It was after ten.

"Lily?" he said, vaguely, as though he had not been thinking of her. "She went home with Mrs. Longmore."

"Mrs. Longmore!" his wife exclaimed, in astonishment. "When was she here? I was here all evening. Why was I not told?"

"She came for a minute only. She —"

"She came for Lily to go down there and see that scoundrel of a Bob Longmore!" Mrs. Beale said, excitedly, "and *you let her!* Roger Beale, *you let her!*"

"Now, my dear," Judge Beale said, in his calmest and most judicial manner, "what could I do?"

Mrs. Beale's face was scarlet. "What could you do? What could you *do?* You could have told her that you did not wish her to go, — that she couldn't and shouldn't go. If I had been here, I rather think she wouldn't have gone. I told Maria Longmore that I wanted her and her son to let my Lily alone. What are they to us?"

"I suppose," said the Judge, restored to his customary equilibrium by this unusual phase in his placid wife, "that they are human beings, and that at the last we owe our fellow beings help whenever we can give it, or they think we can give it. It generally amounts to the same thing

— in everything except the payment of money. That still seems a little too material for anything but actualities.” He was so pleased by this last remark that he felt almost in a good humour.

“I am not sure that a drunkard *is* a human being,” said Mrs. Beale. “A soul is what makes us human, and a drunkard kills his soul.”

“My dear,” said Judge Beale, mildly, “I fear that you are unconsciously acquiring the doctrines of that new faith which you so bitterly condemn.”

“I am doing nothing of the sort. You know better. It is your lightness, your — your — what you call your sense of humour, although I can never see anything in it except trifling with everything, which is responsible for all this. I suppose when Maria Longmore came here and said she wanted Lily, you said nothing, but let her go. It will be all over town by dinner-time to-morrow, that Lily has been down there trying to reform Bob Longmore. As though we hadn’t had enough notoriety. I have no patience with you.”

“What would you have done?”

“I should have told her that she couldn’t go.”

“And suppose that even then — she had gone?”

“She wouldn’t,” said Mrs. Beale, grimly. “Men are all fools. They let a woman do any-

thing." Then she sat down suddenly, and burst into tears.

"Think of its being Lily — *Lily!* She has been such a comfort to us. She was the best child that ever lived — and there wasn't a girl in this town that was so much admired and looked up to by everybody. She was the prettiest girl —"

"I can't see that Lily's beauty has deteriorated," the Judge said, drily.

"You will soon find that people will say so. Did you ever see a crank that was pretty?"

"I do not like your calling my daughter such a name. It isn't respectful. 'Cranks' are not generally found in Lily's class. They are people with the leavings of other people's reasoning, only partly assimilated. Lily is simply a very pure-minded, imaginative girl, who has had her fancy taken by the dramatic event of her aunt's sudden cure, added to what seems to be her own power over the ignorant and neurotic. It is bound to wear itself out. It is a sort of mental wild oats. She will get over it with her first failure." In the effort to argue with his wife, the Judge was convincing himself.

"And you will find that when she gets over it, as you say, other people will not. They will remember it as long as she lives, and she will come out of it with something that will always have

to be explained. And this association with Bob Longmore — ” Words failed her.

“Lily will marry Richards, and we shall hear no more of that.”

“I am not so sure of that. Doctor Richards is like every other man, and already he is back with Lucille.”

“What do you mean by ‘back with Lucille?’ ”

“He was attentive to Lucille before we came home, before he knew Lily — and now — ”

“If Richards is the sort of man that plays fast and loose, we want none of him. If his love for Lily isn’t equal to any strain, it isn’t worth having.”

“But Roger — ”

“I tell you that if Richards is thrown off by this trifling folly, born of the child’s very sweetness and generosity and goodness, he isn’t the man I have thought him. And if Lily’s crankiness, as you call it, shows him in that light, I am extremely glad that it came upon her.”

“Well, I’m not. Men are men, and no man wants a wife that mortifies him.”

Judge Beale went to the closet where his hat and outer coats rested, and took out a shaggy ulster. He was full of rage — and championship of his daughter. The rage which he had had against her had changed sides. He thought of his wife as a narrow-minded woman. He went

out to fetch his daughter home, almost ready to excuse her, except when he thought of Bob Longmore.

He reached the Longmore house not five minutes after Lily and Longmore had returned from the Camp. Lily was still in her wraps, as her father saw with relief when he was ushered into the sitting-room. She had paid no attention to his words, then; she was ready to come home. Robert had gone to the stable to put the horse away for the night, and Judge Beale noted his absence and the rather sorrowful look on the faces of Mrs. Longmore and Lily with satisfaction. He believed, and had he been talking to Richards and on the old footing, he would doubtless have said, that probably Bob Longmore had returned to his old haunts, and he was glad of it. He felt cheerful, and relieved. Lily's escapade, as he termed it in his thoughts, was a good thing after all. She had only learned that lesson that all women learn sooner or later, that a man's vices are as lions against cobwebs when a woman would control them. Sensible women accept that fact, and let vicious men alone.

With his old manner, his air of fatherly superiority, Judge Beale told Lily that he had come for her.

She went with him as though the episode of their parting had not occurred. All the way home

Judge Beale was in high spirits. He had a gay manner, and he had never thought it too much trouble to use his best conversational gifts for his daughter. To-night Lily did not throw the ball back to him. Once she tried to tell him what had happened.

"I have seen a sad thing to-night."

"I fear I cannot sympathise with your pity of it," her father said. "If I had my way with you, you should never see anything but pleasant sights."

"It is Christmas eve. It seems too bad for any one to be unhappy on Christmas eve."

"It would seem to be our first duty to make our own happy," the Judge said, significantly, as he kissed her good night.

He watched her go up-stairs, and then went back to his own sitting-room, where his wife still sat.

"Don't speak to Lily concerning Longmore," he said, as he stooped to turn off the gas fire. "I think she has discovered that she can do nothing with him. He has evidently gone back to his fleshpots."

"Thank Heaven!"

Judge Beale took his wife's arm, and they went up-stairs. From the window on the landing they looked out over the town. The trees were bare,

and the lights which would have been hidden by the foliage in summer were visible now.

"Everybody seems to be getting ready for Christmas," Mrs. Beale said.

Involuntarily both pairs of eyes sought the Longmore house. There was a light in the room they knew to be Mrs. Longmore's bedroom.

To each of them came the vision of the lonely mother waiting on Christmas eve for the son who could only bring an additional sorrow in his coming. They said nothing, but when they went on, each drew a sigh of relief. Lily had surely failed.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CHRISTMAS afternoon is generally long and tiresome. But this year Mrs. Feeley felt that she had never had so enjoyable a holiday. The morning had been dull, and the usual number of remembrances had been a little dilatory in arriving. Mrs. Feeley was a diplomat in Christmas presents, as in everything else — after her lights.

She realised that her claims to social recognition were upon so slight a foundation that they needed bolstering on every side. One woman who made a friend of her must see that others also considered Mrs. Feeley one of themselves. Ordinarily, when her church work did not bring those she coveted about her, Mrs. Feeley knew how to become a suffering sister who required ministration.

Christmas was an opportunity. All the year she worked at small gifts, needle-books, work-baskets, pen-wipers, and doilies, which were done up in tissue-paper and ribbon and sent about on Christmas eve. More than one hurried woman

gave a "*St!*" of impatience when she saw the package, and went out and purchased, or hunted up a gift to return. In that kindly town it would have been a breach of good manners to accept a gift and return none. So that for weeks after Christmas there lay on the table by Mrs. Feeley's side the offerings, which could hardly have been called free-will, which bore the most influential names in Stevensburg. Only the Beales' name had always been absent. Mrs. Beale had been too busy for Mrs. Feeley. This year the gifts seemed more perfunctory than usual. Most of them bore evidence of having been "hunted up" at the last moment. But the afternoon was full. Like all the town, the Feeleys dined early, and as usual they had no guest and no invitations for the day. Although Mrs. Feeley was able to go about in a wheeled chair, she had never, during all the years in Stevensburg, broken bread at any table in the town, nor had anybody of consequence dined at hers. If there had ever been a time when she had expected that sort of recognition, it was long past.

Mr. Feeley, nervous, half-afraid of his wife and what he called her "fine friends," had lately gone through a spiritual experience.

Mrs. Feeley had long looked at the vestry of St. Saviour's, and realised that it were folly to ignore the possibility of being a vestryman's wife.

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The vestry of St. Saviour's was made up of all the male communicants of the church they could muster, and some who were not. The men in the church, or whose families were in the church, had never made a friend of Mr. Feeley. They hardly knew that he was alive. As a non-member there was no possible chance of his being elected to the vestry, — but, Mrs. Feeley realised excitedly, if he were to join the church, there could hardly be a question about it.

She talked the subject over with Mr. Feeley as a preliminary measure, but she met with small encouragement. Mr. Feeley showed the courage of a cross hen who is having the last of her eggs taken.

"See here, Becky," he said, "you work this church racket if you want to, but leave me out. I don't believe in sprinkling, anyway. My people were Dunkards. They went under the water."

"Well, I wouldn't disgrace myself by telling it."

"I don't know that Dunkards are any worse than —" Mr. Feeley hesitated. There was one word that he knew would bring on Mrs. Feeley's rare hysterics. He didn't dare use it, but he gave a weak laugh, and compromised on "old Jacob's religion."

"My father was unfortunately an agnostic," said Mrs. Feeley, with dignity.

After awhile she talked over the state of her husband's soul with Mr. Lessing. Through the attitude of that shepherd of his flock she found some coldness. He very reluctantly agreed to try to win Mr. Feeley to spiritual things, but Mr. Lessing saw ahead as clearly as Mrs. Feeley, and he had a vision of a restraint falling upon the more or less gay meetings of his business board. He was almost afraid that there would come a check upon the free converse; some of them might even resign if a stranger were brought in. It did not take long to transact the business of the church. It usually consisted in jocular remarks concerning its poverty, and attempts on the part of each to shame some one of them into paying a particularly insistent bill. Mr. Shepperson, who was particularly lucky at poker, was always sure to catch a great deal of chaff at the vestry meeting succeeding an unusually fortunate game. It was a time-honoured custom for old Mr. Rhodes to tell that good old story of the sinking sea-captain who couldn't pray, but could take up a collection. And then, it was a habit for one member to bring cigars for them all. Mr. Lessing felt that Mr. Feeley was hardly eligible to this company. And he told Mrs. Feeley that if her husband sought him he should be glad to give him counsel, but he had

conscientious scruples against seeking a man out for such a purpose. It looked like proselyting.

But given time, a woman like Mrs. Feeley wins. Before Mr. Lessing or Mr. Feeley had quite made up their minds, Mr. Feeley had been confirmed while bewildered by nervous embarrassment, and when old Mr. Rhodes died, there was nobody but Mr. Feeley to elect in his place. He would have his first meeting with the vestry to-morrow evening, and Mr. Feeley was trembling in his shoes. It was almost as bad as being sprinkled. Not knowing the duties required of a vestryman, he retired after the Christmas dinner with a text-book of parliamentary law.

Gladys, glad of some diversion, packed a basket, and went over the tracks to a washerwoman's children. Mrs. Feeley had settled herself with "The Sorrows of Satan," when she heard the gate click, and saw Laura Shepperson coming up the walk.

Miss Corelli's masterpiece went under the chair cushion with haste, and Mrs. Feeley drew toward her a Ralph Waldo Emerson birthday-book which Miss Creighton had sent her. The first fly-leaf, which had evidently at some time contained an inscription, had been torn out, Mrs. Feeley noticed, but she did not intend that any one else should. Laura was too much agitated to be

diverted by anything save a recognition of her own state of mind.

"Are you alone?" she asked, at once. Mrs. Feeley recognised the dramatic atmosphere in her visit, and hastened to be a responsive audience.

"Let me tell you something that a friend has just brought to my ears," Laura said, "and see what you think of Lily Beale then."

Mrs. Feeley laughed lightly. "I shall probably think of her exactly as I do now." Evidently the tone was encouraging, for Laura answered swiftly, "That is why I come to talk to you. You are so wise. You are not prejudiced by family ties, by old acquaintance." If Mrs. Feeley winced, Laura did not see it. "You were not brought up in this dead little town, where everybody is blinded until some flash of light comes. You can see through hypocrisy and false friends." Laura drew in her breath, and tossed her head backward, as one who would throw off a weight of some sort.

"My poor child!"

"Last night," she measured every word by a breath through her teeth, "at ten o'clock, Lily Beale and Mr. Longmore were driving along Bronson Avenue. They were seen."

Mrs. Feeley fairly held her breath with delight. Here was a piece of news!

"Who saw them? Couldn't it have been a

mistake?" she asked, eagerly. "Surely, it must have been some one else." It seemed too good to be true.

"I do not know whether I am at liberty to tell who saw them." Holly Ainslee had told her first, and afterward the same tale to everybody he knew, begging each not to tell it. "But there is no doubt about it. They were driving along in the shadow, when suddenly the electric light showed full on their faces."

Mrs. Feeley gave an ugly little laugh. "Miss Lily has fooled everybody very well indeed. Of course this isn't the first time. We might have known that she couldn't speak to him with such authority as she seemed to have shown the night of the dance, unless she were in the habit of seeing him, meeting him. How they must have laughed! And how quickly she took up Christian Science as an excuse, when she found that she had betrayed herself. She must have been doing this for years. It is truly wonderful how a sin will find one out at last."

"Do you think so?" Laura asked, her eyes growing narrow. "Do you think Lily Beale has let me tell her all about Bob Longmore when all the time she was meeting him secretly?"

Mrs. Feeley put out a soothing hand.

"My dear, none of us are exempt from the machinations of the deceitful. Be glad that you

have discovered this in time. You are better without such friends."

"I know I am, but to think of that girl looking as though she were the greatest saint that walked the earth, pretending that she hardly knew Bob, and going out every night of her life and meeting him. It makes my blood boil in my veins." Laura's heated imagination only needed the oil of Mrs. Feeley's words to see depths of iniquity lighted up by their flames. "What would you do?"

Mrs. Feeley thought a moment.

"I think if I were you, I should treat the whole thing with dignified contempt."

"And never let her know that I know what she has done? I knew there was some reason why Mr. Longmore stayed away, why he did not reform, and come back to me."

"Of course it was always you whom he loved. It is now," softly. "You are too young to know how men regard a girl like this Beale girl." There was the bottled venom from years of calm ignoring by the Beales in "this Beale girl." "They never have the real, true love and respect of any man. They are creatures to be thrown aside. It is sad indeed for you to realise that you have been friends with her."

"The first thing Bob Longmore asked me, was, 'Are you jealous of Lily Beale?'" That

was out before Laura knew it. When she realised what she had said, she crimsoned, and went on to explain, haltingly, that when she had seen Mr. Longmore, she had told him that she must finally discard him, and ask him to consider their acquaintance at an end.

“And that was his reply?”

“It was.”

“That proves everything, — everything. It was a guilty conscience speaking. You should have known then, at once, that there was a close connection between those two.”

Laura arose and drew on the white gloves, which she always wore — in diminishing degrees of freshness according to the formality of the occasion. “I shall go home at once, and write her a letter and tell her so. She shall know exactly what I think of her, and that I know — *all*.”

Mrs. Feeley drew her down again.

“No. You will only give her time to see Mr. Longmore and prepare a defence. If they have been clever enough to deceive everybody, they are clever enough for that. Hurt her as she has hurt you.” Mrs. Feeley suddenly stopped. She was forgetting her rôle of Christian. The eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth doctrines ingrained in her blood and bone were hard to keep under the surface. “It seems only right

that Doctor Richards should be told what sort of a girl he has cared for. It is a duty to him that we owe."

"Do you think I should go to Doctor Richards and tell him?"

"No, no. That might cause you to be misunderstood. I will do that."

CHAPTER XXV.

CHRISTMAS day brought two gifts to Lily which dwarfed the rest. One was a great bunch of fragrant roses from Richards. He could not let the day go by without letting her know that he thought of her.

Lily put her face into their honey-breathing petals and her lips curved with happiness.

"Why do you wait so long?" she whispered.

The other was a letter from Mrs. Longmore, telling her again that the gift which this Christmas had brought was one of almost unbelievable happiness.

Robert was taking her away that very day. He was like a lover who is impatient to take his bride into new scenes for a honeymoon, that they may grow to know each other away from any suggestion of a time when it was different. That they could be leaving Lily to any trouble on account of the night before, and the death of the child, neither of them thought for a moment.

The holiday still clogged the wheels of business the day after Christmas, and Judge Beale

was at home enjoying the piles of new books which the day before had brought to his table.

It was with some surprise that he saw Geraldine come into the room with the black disapproval of youth puckering her brow. He waited in some amusement, looking at the tragic mask which she was trying to make of her peachy young face, through the smoke of his after-breakfast cigar. He knew that the explosion would come sooner or later.

"Father," Jerry said, unsteadily, "I wish you would send me away to school."

Judge Beale looked at his younger daughter as though she had lost her senses.

It had been a theory of his that the place for a girl was at home, that cooping from fifty to five hundred, young, emotional creatures up together could only result in mischief. He had said dozens of times that any girl with a happy home wanted to stay there. And here was his own daughter ready to leave him.

"I'll study anything. I'll go anywhere. I'll even go over to those silly schools in Western Kentucky that they send the stupid girls to. I won't stay at home."

"What is it?" her father asked.

"It's —" Jerry gulped. And then she burst out, wrath getting the better of her tears.

"Who do you think half *lives* here, with Lily?

She's up-stairs now, and Lily's door is locked. That fool wife of Mr. DeLacy Rossiter's, that *everybody* laughs at. Nobody knows her. She is just a common little thing, not in our set at all. Even the girls at school tell stories about the mistakes she makes. She can't speak good grammar."

" 'Good English' is a better term," said her father, mildly.

"Oh, you can laugh if you want to! But I tell you I think Lily has been — *hypnotised*, or something. She does such funny things. And I don't think it's fair. After awhile nobody nice will have anything to do with us. That awful old Leftwick woman —"

"My dear, your language is not all I could desire."

But Jerry was a young American who had always been a good deal freer in comment to her father than any other member of the family.

"I don't care. She is awful. *Nobody* goes there, and she wears strings of diamonds all the time, and says 'ourn' and 'yourn.'" Scorn could go no farther.

"How long has Mrs. Rossiter been coming here?"

"I don't know. It's only the last week that I have seen her. But she's here every single day, and she gave Lily a Christmas present!"

Judge Beale looked at Jerry, and felt anew the impotence of a man before his children.

"Jerry," he said, at last, "I am afraid you are a snob."

"Well, now, papa, I ask you, do you like it? Do you like the way Lily is doing? If wanting my family to associate with nice people and not do queer things is being a snob, why, all right, I am one, and so are you." She felt the sympathy behind the cigar, and capped it.

"The best person for us to discuss this matter with is Lily. I am sure that if you make her understand that she is causing you pain" — Judge Beale could not keep the humour out of his voice — "she will gladly give up Mrs. Rossiter to please you."

"Do you *think* she will?" with extreme sarcasm. "She would say she was doing her some good. I wish that my family didn't care whether people were good or bad. That's the way to be. If people are bad, just let them alone — that's all."

"Pass by on the other side of the road."

"That's not necessary," said practical Geraldine, who did not catch the allusion. "If you hold your head high enough, and never see them, they'll get out of your road. I *hate* people that have something the matter with them."

"Geraldine," her father said, judicially, "if

I felt fit for the task, I should deliver some remarks to you, upon your unhappy state of mind. You should say these things to your sister."

"You think she'd lecture, don't you? Well, she don't. I've said them to her until I'm black in the face. You don't suppose I'd have come to you first, do you? She won't even argue anything. She don't feel like other people. That's what makes her so queer. Nobody else is like that."

There was a commotion in the hall, and Jack came in, breathless and red.

"There's a man out here who says he wants to see Lily, a constable," — Jack's high voice was breaking with agitation, — "and I think you ought to see him first."

"Some more!" Jerry said, and followed her father through the conservatory, and into the hall. Lily and Mrs. Rossiter were coming down the stairs.

The man in the hall cleared his throat, but he evidently felt his own importance as he answered Judge Beale's query as to his business.

"I have come to arrest Lily Beale for causing the death of William Henry Sawyer by illegally practising medicine," he said. He was giving it as straight as it had been given to him.

Maybelle Rossiter put her arm across Lily, and burst out with a cry.

"Who made out this warrant?"

"Sanders."

Judge Beale was too angry to speak.

"You go down and say that I will attend to this matter."

"Duty's duty, Jedge."

"I'll be responsible here. You go." He held the door open, and the man went.

"It's all wery well for 'em to tell a feller what to do," he muttered to himself, "but I ain't taking no chances with Jedge Beale."

"Oh, what is it?" Maybelle moaned. "She hasn't done anything?"

"Mrs. Rossiter," Judge Beale said, "you will be happier at home. Lily, my dear, come here and tell me about this."

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE new factories of which Stevensburg was so proud, which were adding every day to the town's material wealth, had changed, by the voice of their workmen, the rulers of the town. In the old days, full of traditions of the South, the men of the old families, of character, of learning, had felt it their duty to hold the offices. Now few of them were allowed the privilege. The town's officers were elected by the people from the people.

The coroner was a plumber who bore the title of doctor. When the State of Kentucky first awakened to a sense of her responsibilities, and her legislative bodies solemnly considered how much a physician should know before he was licensed to attempt to cure, there were so many doctors, practising medicine with as great success as any of their contemporaries, who had had no schooling at all, that a special law was made. If a man had practised medicine for a certain number of years, his license was given him without further question. When Judge

Beale told an appreciative audience stories of his native State, this plumber, whose local nickname was "Doctor Tin-pot" was given as an example of the vagaries of law. In his tinkering days, he had once attempted the cure of a carpenter who had fallen from a house and been injured internally. When a real physician was finally brought, he asked the tinker what he had done for the now dying man.

"I give him rosum an' alum," Doctor Tin-pot said; "alum to draw the parts together, an' rosum to make 'm stick."

Of late years he had been more noted for his verdicts than for his practice. He had announced that one man came to his death "from an unknown cause, believed to be brass knuckles worn by a gentleman who had an alibi."

It was Judge Beale who had first appreciated the coroner, and he was consequently regarded by that official with a bitter hatred. He knew that he was being made sport of, but he could not grasp how, or where.

When the case of the Sawyer child was brought to him, and he had heard Clay's story, he ventured to express a belief that this would be a verdict that "the big-bugs that thought they was so darned funny wouldn't do no laughin' at, to speak of."

The excited Sawyer women had added their

stories, and the coroner promptly announced that the child had "come to its death through malpractice at the hands of one Lily Beale, who had no license to practise medicine."

When Judge Beale went down-town that morning, he had no fears as to his ability to "stop this nonsense," — but he literally reckoned without the host.

The people's curiosity had been aroused. They wanted the piquant sight of Judge Beale's daughter, the beautiful healer of whom they had heard, being tried before a magistrate. They wanted to hear "all about it."

The physicians in town shook their heads, and said they were sorry that Clay had precipitated this thing, but if an example would stop this Christian Science tomfoolery, the sooner it came the better. It would be a lesson to the community. And almost every one was there to hear the story at the trial.

Doctor Richards came to Judge Beale's office, and had written to Lily, and begged that he might come with her, sit beside her, do anything; but both she and her father had steadfastly refused.

"There is no need of giving the papers one more morsel of sensationalism," Judge Beale had said, grimly; and that had been the final word.

"Do you wish me to go?" Mrs. Beale had

asked. It seemed as though the very fountains of her mother-love had been dried up in this ordeal. Her gaze seemed to slip away from the face of her eldest daughter. Her morning eyes showed how she had spent the nights, but daylight saw no breakdown. She went about her daily tasks as usual, with no word even to her husband. To him had come a passionate, new tenderness for his child. He was ready to fight the world for her, forgetting his own hardness against this strange new cult of hers. She was his, and to be protected.

The morning of the trial Lily came downstairs, serene of face, her colour unchanged. Her smart blue cloth jacket, with its bands and buttons, the wings of her hat at just the right angle, made her look like a typical young woman of fashion. There was no pale shadow of martyrdom in her modish appearance. Doubtless it was like this that those ladies of ancient Rome went serenely to the tribunals which were to condemn them to the tigers. To-day our tigers are not less cruel, although they have changed their form.

"Mamma," Lily said to her gray-faced mother, "whatever they do or say, I am perfectly willing to suffer for my faith's sake. It is no disgrace. It is the road a good many saints have gone. I'm in good company," and she gave a little smile of reassurance.

At the door they met Jack in his Sunday clothes, gloved and hatted, and standing almost straight.

"Where are you going, sir?" his father asked.

"I am going with my sister, where I belong," the boy answered, and looked into his father's eyes with their counterparts.

"Quite right," his father said.

After they had reached the gate there was a flurry behind them, and Geraldine came, her fur boa dragging off one shoulder.

"I am going, too. If mamma don't know what she ought to do, I do," she said, grandly.

"You go back and stay with your mother, and I do not wish to hear you speak in that tone again," Judge Beale stopped to say.

"I've as good a right as Jack."

"Shall I escort you back?"

Jerry turned in a fury.

"I suppose that Rossiter girl will be there!" She turned back because she did not dare disobey, but she filled her mind with cutting things she might dare say to her mother. They all died when she saw the calm woman who represented law and order to her household lying on the sofa hysterical with weeping. Jerry spent the morning in meek offices, almost forgetting the cause of it all.

Jack gritted his teeth at the attention they

attracted as they went down the street. He wondered why they had not driven. From Mrs. Feeley's to the Sheppersons' every curtain seemed to have a face behind it.

Early that morning Mrs. Feeley had telephoned for Doctor Richards. She felt that she must tell him now about that drive with Longmore. In the snatches that had come to her of the stories of the midnight drive and the child's death, she had not connected Lily's visit to the Camp with the drive. She fairly ached with a desire to see how Doctor Richards would "take it."

Her summons was so peremptory that Richards was obliged to obey it, and as Lily went by, he sat by Mrs. Feeley's chair. Her wicked little eyes looked from the window to his face.

"I think my illness is mostly nervous, doctor," she said, plaintively. "I have been in such agony. My nature is so sympathetic. People bring their troubles to me, and I suffer with them. Only a day or two ago I was grievously shocked. One of our beautiful, dear girls came to me to tell me how she had been wronged by a friend." Doctor Richards, his mind busy with his own affairs, hardly heard her. "She had been true to her lover through terrible trials, and then she discovered that he had been led away from her by her dearest friend, — that they had been meeting, her lover and her friend, in all

sorts of clandestine ways. They were seen at midnight down on Bronson Avenue. She asked my advice. How should I advise her?"

Richards laughed. "I am afraid I am not so sympathetic as you are. I do not know. If her friend and her lover are disloyal, the easiest thing would be to get rid of them both." Patients had queer fancies, he thought. They were always confiding in doctors. Mrs. Feeley was a sufficiently clever actress to deceive his unsuspecting mind.

"But this rests on my heart. The man is a wicked man. It seems terrible that Robert Longmore should wreck the lives of two girls like Laura Shepperson and Lily Beale." Mrs. Feeley put her hand over her mouth after she had spoken, and gave an inarticulate cry.

"What have I said?" she asked, piteously.

Richard's face did not change in one lean muscle. He arose, looked at the bottle on the table.

"Mrs. Feeley," he said, ceremoniously, "I will turn your case with all my notes over to any physician you may name." And with a bow he walked out of the room.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE court-room where the magistrate held his court was a small one, hardly more than an office. There was a slightly elevated seat for the magistrate, beside which was a rusty black chair for witnesses.

The gas radiator makes a close heat, and the air was stifling with the crowd. The case just before this one had been for the settlement of a dispute between the residents of a house-boat on the river and a woman on the bank of a profession our civilisation ignores.

The house-boat people are a class apart, veritable gipsies, living sometimes a dozen or two together in one small room as indiscriminately as animals. The Sawyers, who had come early, had the unusual glory of social elevation when they contemplated the house-boat people, who were there for the trial of one of their kind. They were thrilled with excitement. The Sawyer family had never had such a Christmas as this had been. They would date from it all the rest of their lives. Yesterday, there had been the

baby's funeral, when Mr. Batton had preached a powerful sermon, in which he had warned them against the terrible sin of blasphemy, the following after wicked people who tried to play upon their imaginations by the devil's arts. Mr. Batton had no soft words at his command, and he felt an anger which he called a righteous anger against the woman who had brought this child to its death. He was particularly severe with Lyddy. His whole attitude toward her had been one of censure. He remembered that she had been one of the people who had had his particular teachings upon this very subject. He had not said, "I told you so," but his remarks over the poor little coffin could have been freely translated into those words. As he spoke on, he worked himself into a gasping fury and hurled invective. He had said that the death of this child was a sin against God and man, and it would surely be punished by both. He had had a little conversation with Doctor Clay, who had made an exception to his rule of never attending a patient's funeral, before he stood up to speak.

The Sawyer women had wept loudly as they listened, and sobbed, "Pore little feller!" as they looked at him for the last time. But there was one woman whose eyes were dry. Lyddy had shed all of her tears, and she remembered that not one of these women had even spoken to one

of her children except to call it a "brat," and ask how many aprons a week its mother washed for it.

Jake had gone off to the country. He felt that he was held responsible for bringing Miss Beale "to kill the baby," and his soul weakened under the responsibility.

The women looked at Lyddy as one set apart by grief. "She don't know nothin'," they told the neighbours. Doctor Clay, who appeared as plaintiff for the people, evidently thought so, too, for she was not called as a witness at the inquest.

The magistrate had made an effort to clear the room. The house-boat people could be hustled out without any ceremony. They had no votes. But there was a difficulty in disposing of the rest. This was a case that a great many of the magistrate's friends wanted to hear. His wife and daughters and their friends were there to feast their eyes on the Beales in any sort of trouble, and to hear the story. The reporters were there with eager pencils, but there were very few friends of the Beales. They had thought it vulgar to go.

That morning at breakfast Mr. Shepperson had expressed his strong indignation at the "outrage," and had suggested that Laura and Miss Creighton should go with him to show their sympathy and friendship.

"I do not believe in women going to court generally, but on this occasion I should like to see the town turn out, — to see there every friend the Beales have."

"You will not find them," said Miss Emeline.

"I suppose Bob Longmore will be there," Virginia said, helping herself to another hot cake. "You and Bob Longmore are the family friends. If you marry Miss Cathie — You needn't look at me in that way, Aunt Em. Anybody with half an eye can see that father's got a mash on Miss Cathie. No deceased-wife's-sister business doing, this year."

"Virginia, leave the room."

Virginia took the morning paper from the hand of the negro boy who was serving the cakes, anticipating her aunt's outstretched hand.

"Pa," she said, as she opened its dingy gray sheets, "if I had left the room as often as you've told me to go, I'd have worn a hole in the carpet between here and the door."

"Mr. Longmore seems to have found himself in a situation he did not care to face," Laura said, lightly. "He and his mother have left town."

"A good riddance," Mr. Shepperson muttered.

Virginia gave a crow of laughter from the interior of the *Morning Shaft*.

"If you go down this morning, you may meet some other old friends." And then she read:

" 'Serena Payne has a house-boater arrested for stealing a case of beer from her porch.' "

Laura snatched the paper from her sister's hand, her delicate, pointed face distorted with anger.

"How *dare* you! How *can* you! You ought to be whipped."

"Well, I can't help it if she's your cousin." Virginia kept up the fight as her father took her by the shoulders and gently propelled her toward the door, his face grim. "Aunt Em over there looks as though she could stand any disgrace in the Shepperson family."

Mr. Shepperson went down-town wondering if other men took any comfort in their daughters. He thought of Serena Payne. She had been Serena Shepperson, his dead brother's child. He was thankful for the small mercy that she had a married name.

Serena had been such a beautiful little girl. When she was fifteen there were vague hints about her. She had acquaintances of grown men, who were unknown to her family. At sixteen her eyes were like imitation sapphires in their false brightness. When the family friends heard the stories current about her, they seemed too unpleasantly vulgar to be true. Nice girls and boys

of her own age instinctively shrank from her. At eighteen she eloped with an actor in one of the cheap theatrical companies, and everybody drew a sigh of relief. Then there was a miserable story about her from Maurilla, and presently she was back, drinking, loud, a horror to the town that had known her, until at last she had joined the colony on the river, which had grown big and gaudy with colour since the village became a city. The very name of the street on which she lived was tabooed. Almost every town has its demon-possessed to-day as nineteen hundred years ago.

It was with an apprehension that Mr. Shepperson looked about him when he entered the courtroom, and when he saw the brilliantly coloured face of Serena Payne, under its great black hat of plumes, he turned away with a disgust that nauseated him. Serena Payne was a large woman, with heavy, red, contemptuous lips, and lines about them marked there by the scenes in which she had lived. The eyelids over the blue eyes, a little dull now, were tinted by cynicism. Lily Beale had grown up since her day, but she had that fearful joy in what she knew was the humiliation of the Beales which belongs to the misery that loves company.

She narrowed her eyes a little more when she looked at Lily. She had expected to see veiled

tears or fanaticism. The calmness of Lily's well-bred, pure face, tinted by the fresh air outside, and seemingly unaffected by the close room, puzzled her.

Doctor Clay took the stand as the first witness. The prosecuting attorney was a thin, glib young man who had taught a country school while he studied law, and who was agreed to be "as sharp as they make 'em." His questions brought out Doctor Clay's story, to which everybody listened as breathlessly as though each individual in the room had not known his reputation as an unreliable man.

Doctor Clay's story was a simple narrative. He had had a patient, a child named Sawyer, ill with diphtheria. He had visited the child for four days. He had feared the growth of a membrane in the child's throat, and he had gone on Christmas eve prepared to perform an operation if necessary. He had found the defendant, Lily Beale, there. She had taken the case out of his hands, although she was, he understood, unlicensed to practise medicine, and had utterly refused to allow him to perform the operation. She had further insulted him by calling him a "murderer." He had, he asserted, begged her to allow him to call Doctor Richards. Clay hesitated here, as an actor will stop for an instant, to give a point full effect. But Miss Beale had

repeated her remark that all doctors were murderers. While he was trying to convince her that his operation was necessary, the child choked to death.

There was a murmur throughout the room. This was worse than they had supposed.

The Sawyer women were thrilled by it. They had been there; they knew, or they would have known had their minds been trained to know anything really, that the story as told by Clay was a tissue of falsehood, but now they were hypnotised by their own delight in the horrible, as minds like theirs have been since the beginning of human testimony.

Cross-examination by Judge Beale failed to shake this testimony. The magistrate fingered the heavy Masonic emblem on his watch-chain, letting it fall into the deep wrinkles of his broad waistcoat, and smiled insolently. Judge Beale and he were old political enemies.

The traditional theory that a beautiful young girl can touch the coarsest heart is one that we may see dying every day, did we choose to look.

The Sawyer women testified, one after the other, repeating and adding colour to Clay's tale, taken from their own imaginations and the newspaper stories they had heard told.

The last of them, Abe's wife, had insisted that

Lily had said that the child had better die than be touched by a doctor.

Lily, her face as placid and untouched as a flower, went through the simple formality of being sworn. The audience drew a sigh of satisfaction, and strained its ears for what was to come.

The story was very simple: The father of the child had come for her; she was in the house with the child about five minutes before it died. The mother of the child refused to allow her to touch it. When Doctor Clay entered, he took the baby from its mother's arms, and said that he would take it to the pest-house. It seemed to pass out, as he held it.

"There was no reference to an operation?"

"None at all."

"Did you speak to Doctor Clay?"

"I did not."

"Did you give the child any medicine?"

"I did not."

"What did Doctor Clay say when he saw that the child was dead?"

"Let me see if you can get a death certificate out of me. I've got these Christian Scientists where I want them."

"That is all," Judge Beale said.

The young prosecuting attorney took up the witness.

"What do you mean by 'pass out?'"

"I mean that the Life, the Spirit, went out."

"I thought you people," the young lawyer's tone was familiar to jocularly, "didn't believe in death."

"Life is immortal."

"The child didn't die, then?"

"Certainly not."

"Well, I notice they buried it yesterday," with an air of wit. "Where did it pass out to?"

"To God," said Lily.

"Oh, that's like all the rest of us. But I understood your idea was that you could keep people from dying. But I see. It's just plain, old-fashioned dying you object to. 'Passing out' is all right. But people object to 'passing out.' It's just as uncomfortable as dying."

Judge Beale had objected, but the magistrate let the young man go on.

"What good did you expect to do this child by letting it choke to death?"

"There is death for those who do not understand that they are a reflection of all Life," Lily said. In her heart was a prayer that she might make these poor ignorant people see. What mattered anything else? She herself, that dignity of which convention would be called out to remind her, was as nothing. Here were people dying, because they could not understand this which was

so sure and so simple. She was not of those who judge too readily who are the swine, before whom it were folly to cast pearls. "The baby need not have died had those about it known that it was not necessary."

She vibrated with her wish to tell them, these people, that the birthright of dominion over the universe might be theirs; the dominion of the body was theirs to take. Each of them was created in God's image. She saw that only.

"The Divine Life is the real part of us. When we are in harmony with it, we are part of it, its expression. Nothing can hurt us really. Surely you can see how we transform ourselves, make ourselves what we are. Even a dog knows a good man from a bad man. We mark ourselves, our faces, our walk, with our thoughts."

Serena Payne sat with staring eyes, the awful lines about her mouth relaxed a little.

The magistrate's gavel came down. "This isn't a church. We don't care for a sermon this morning."

Clay's eyes went from one face to another, trying to find a pair to match them, but everybody was looking at Lily.

"That's all," the young lawyer said, shortly.

As Lily left the chair, Lyddy Sawyer came forward and seated herself. Nobody had sum-

moned her, and Judge Beale did not have time to ask her a question.

"I jes' want to say," she said, "that every word Miss Beale says is so. I wisht now I'd 'a' let her had th' baby."

"And," Judge Beale's voice rang out, "is this story of Doctor Clay's true? Did you hear Miss Beale speak to Doctor Clay?"

"No, sir."

"What did he say?"

"He said he'd take th' baby to the pest-house." Lyddy's face worked.

"And that he had the Christian Scientists where he wanted them?"

"I object to the opposing counsel putting words into the mouth of the witness," said the prosecuting attorney.

"Objection sustained."

"What else did he say?"

"That he wouldn't give no certificate, and that he had the Christian Scientists where he wanted them."

"A very good place, too," said the prosecuting attorney, as he took up the questioning.

"You — er — were pretty sorry over the baby, wasn't thinking of much else but the baby, Mrs. Sawyer?"

"I could hear," said Lyddy, in the tone of information.

The magistrate called himself lenient that he imposed the minimum fine for practising medicine without a license. He hoped it would be a warning. He said that the public, and particularly helpless little children, should be in the hands of careful, skilful physicians, protected against irresponsible people.

On the way home, Jack (his father let the brother and sister go home together) came close to his sister.

"Lily," he said, "I think you are all right, but you oughtn't to mix up with roughs. I wanted to smash that jay lawyer — with his cheek! How could you talk about things like that to those — those *jays*?" He couldn't think of any word to use to a lady that was more expressive.

"Because I so want everybody to know."

"They wouldn't know anything if they could. And if it's goin' to do 'em any good, I don't want 'em to. I wish they were all dead now — all that trash."

His young soul burned with indignation. Lily took his arm with a laugh.

"Jack," she said, "I love everybody. If they *knew*, they'd all be so nice they wouldn't be jays."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE supper-table at Mrs. Allaire's was surrounded by an animated company the evening after the trial. Holly Ainslee had found time to attend.

"I didn't exactly take a front seat," he said. "There were lots of old friends attending the two trials." A suppressed giggle came from one or two women at this reference to Serena Payne. There is an order of mind which finds amusement in a veiled mention of a shocking, sorrowful fact. Doctor Richards was not at the table. He had been very busy lately. At any rate he seldom ate his meals at Mrs. Allaire's table.

"But did you hear?"

"I heard. It was Lily Beale against the whole field. She said one thing, and Clay and the Sawyers said another. Evidently the judge believed the Sawyers. He fined her. But the best thing was her sermon. She preached us a sermon." There were various expressions of wonder and disbelief.

"Lily Beale! She is a well-bred girl. Don't

jest," Mrs. Allaire said. She had been a little sharp with Ainslee lately. He had deserted her, and she had heard of the visits to the Sheppersons.

"Well, that's what the judge called it. It was a very good sermon. Had more ginger than 'She bound a scarlet thread in the window,' although it wasn't so long. She did it. I certainly felt sorry for Judge Beale," he added, magnanimously.

A sharp-voiced woman, who ran the sewing-machine emporium, leaned forward from the lower end of the table. She had been in the town six months, and saw it as a map before her, socially speaking. It was one of Mrs. Allaire's grievances that she was compelled to have her company three times a day, but a paying boarder was not to be even snubbed.

"But I heard that the child's mother corroborated Miss Beale."

"Oh, that was rather pitiful," Ainslee said. "Poor ignorant thing! She naturally clings to the idea that something might have saved the poor little rat. Goodness knows, if I'd been born a Sawyer, I'd think I was in luck to be dead. But I guess this will put a stop to Christian Science healing in this town. The kid died. That's settled."

Maybelle had sat just where the gaslight from

the centre of the table shone upon her face. It was alternately red and white as she listened. She feared Mr. Ainslee's replies, and she seldom addressed him. He seemed able to make her ridiculous always. But she could not help speaking now.

"Will it be against the law for her to cure anybody?"

"It is against the law for her to try it," Ainslee replied. "She don't seem to be quite so able to cure as she thought, or as she pretended to think. It seems to be developing now that Miss Beale is interested in other things than healing — she seems to be a pretty shrewd young lady."

The sharp-voiced woman down the table spoke again.

"I heard to-day that all this healing business was just a blind. She got mad at Mr. Longmore, and gave him a dressing down at her party, and then to cover up the fact that they were old friends, and that she had a right to scold him, said she cured him by Christian Science."

"That certainly took us in for awhile," Ainslee said.

"I also heard," said the woman, "that she and Mr. Longmore were out driving Christmas eve, and somebody saw them, and she went to see the Sawyer child so that she would have an excuse for being out."

"Now who told you that?" The table was visibly excited.

"I got it pretty straight. And I also heard that Judge Beale had given Bob Longmore six hours in which to leave town."

"It's these innocent girls that do all the mischief," somebody else said.

"By the way, where's the doctor?" Ainslee asked, innocently, looking about amid smothered laughter.

Maybelle's face grew red.

"I think Miss Beale is as good and sweet as she can be, and that she can cure people."

There was silence. Ainslee looked at her quizzically, and her husband angrily. Ainslee had opened his mouth for one of his purring remarks, when he caught Rossiter's gloomy eye shifted toward his for an instant, and decided that his remark was better left unsaid.

"I think it is very sweet of you to take up for her in that way," Mrs. Allaire said, amiably. "But really, when you come to think of it, there isn't anybody to be found that she has actually cured. That child they talked so much about has gone away."

"And I heard," the sharp-voiced woman, who certainly seemed unusually sharp of ear as well as of voice, said, "that the child was as bad as

ever, and that the Beales were paying the woman to stay in the country."

"There's Mr. Longmore." Maybelle was defiant. But nobody answered her. Amid general laughter, the table broke up.

Ainslee moved his seat down next to Mrs. Allaire, and had another cup of coffee.

"What's struck poor Maybelle?"

"Oh, Lily Beale came and called on her, and I believe she goes up there. Of course she would be anxious to defend her to show that she knew her. Poor little thing!"

"Maybe she's curing Maybelle of something."

"If it is ignorance, she hasn't gone far."

Up-stairs the Rossiters sat by the little round table, on which the Welsbach burner stood in a rose mat which Maybelle had crocheted with the idea that it added to the cosiness of the room. That whole table irritated DeLacy. He didn't know why, but it looked wrong. He didn't read much, but he brought home some good solid books and insisted upon Maybelle's reading them. The sight of her neat pile of *Munsey's* made him realise that she wasn't like the other girls. They read *Munsey's*, but threw them around carelessly, and always mentioned that they bought them "simply for the pictures." She had one of DeLacy's books in her hand now, but she wasn't reading. He usually went down-town in

the evening, after a Stevensburg habit, and some way this evening it seemed to him that Maybelle was waiting for him to be gone.

Consequently he lighted a cigar and reached under the table for another book. It was a minute before Maybelle saw what he had. Then she gave a little gasp and sat quite still.

Rossiter looked at the title, and opened the book at the fly-leaf. Written inside in a bold hand was "To sweet little Mrs. Rossiter, from her friend who has faith, Mrs. Eliza Leftwick." It had been written by Johnny at his mother's dictation.

"What in hell is this damned nonsense?" Rossiter asked, furiously. It seemed to him that only by swearing could he make an adequate antidote to the book.

"Science and Health, with Key to the Scriptures," he read out in the most sarcastic tone at his command. "What does that old — squaw mean by daring to send that trash to you?" He started toward the fire, and then realised that a gas fire was not intended for destroying. "I'll send it back to her, and I'll make that back-country trash understand their place."

"Oh, Lacy, don't. She's been so kind." Maybelle's delicate face began to pucker with coming tears.

"Kind! Those people can't be kind to you."

All his resentment at having to work for Leftwick went into anger at his wife, at what seemed a new humiliation. "What did she give you this stuff for? Is she toadying to the Beales?"

"It's a great book. Miss Lily told me to read it. She wanted to give me one — *she's* your kind," poor Maybelle pleaded, — "but Mrs. Leftwick had sent it to me. I'm better whenever I've read it." She hadn't intended to say that, and she stopped suddenly.

"Better of what?"

"Oh," Maybelle faltered, the blood fluttering into her cheeks, giving the lie to her poor little words, "just better."

Rossiter put the book down. He looked at his wife as though he had never seen her before, as a stranger might have looked who was seeking to know every secret her face could tell. And in the drawn skin, the circles about her eyes, the dry lips, Rossiter saw warnings that tore at his very heart.

He leaned over and took her wrists in his hands. There was no tenderness in his touch. He was furious that she should be ill, and that she had not given him an earlier chance to ward an illness off. And she had been letting folly trifle with her.

"Oh, Lacy, you hurt me!"

"Tell me," he said, "what is the matter? *Tell me!*"

Maybelle drew a sobbing breath.

"It's — oh, Lacy, oh, Lacy, I'm so *afraid!*" She broke into pitiful crying. "I wasn't afraid. Miss Lily was taking it all away. When I'm with her I'm not a bit afraid, and — it's getting better."

"*What's* getting better?"

"That lump."

"*What* lump? Why don't you tell me?"

"In my breast, under my arm." She almost whispered it between her sobs.

"*You* — have a lump in your breast?"

The man's face was pallid, and his lips parted, as though it were difficult for him to get his breath through.

"Yes."

"And — your mother —"

"Oh, don't say it!" Maybelle wailed. "Miss Lily says I'm never to *think* it. She made me stop, and since then it isn't nearly so big, and it's not sore like it was."

"How long?"

"A long time. Since we came here I noticed it first."

"And you went to that Leftwick woman and Lily Beale, and never told me. You were letting

them kill you, let you die, and you never told me!"

"Miss Lily said not to talk about it. I tell you, Lacy, — *don't* look like that! — it was going away." She spoke in the past tense, as though all hope of its going away was ended now.

"Of course she would tell you that. She killed a baby the other night, and now she is trying to kill you. Can't you understand anything?" He was rude in his fright and fury. Poor little Maybelle, who didn't know enough to take care of herself, who belonged to him, and who had given herself, his property, into the hands of those who would destroy her! "Mrs. Leftwick is an ignorant old woman, the kind that go to fortune-tellers. Lily Beale is a deceitful, bad girl. Everybody knows that now. Didn't you hear what they said about her to-night? You must see a doctor at once. I am going for Richards now."

Maybelle put out her arms in protest. "Oh, Lacy, please, *please* see Miss Lily first. I tell you it is getting better. Every day it is getting better. If I weren't so afraid! If it hadn't been for mamma — making me so afraid, Miss Lily says it would be cured at once."

"She would tell you anything. She lied on the witness-stand to-day. She's a criminal." He wanted to say anything that would get Maybelle

from Lily Beale's influence. He threw on his hat and coat, and went out.

A half an hour later the telephone bell at the Glovers' rang, and Lucille went out into the hall to answer it. She was flushed and happy.

"Yes," she said, "this is Mr. Glover's. What is it?"

"Is Doctor Richards there?" a voice asked.

Lucille's tones stiffened.

"Who is it?"

"This is DeLacy Rossiter. Is it you, Lucille? The doctor's boy said that Doctor Richards might be at your house. If he is, will you please ask him to come down and see my wife? I am alarmed about her."

"I will tell him," she said, and hung up the receiver.

When she gave Richards the message, she hesitated.

"I suppose I may ask you if Mrs. Rossiter has been ill, since DeLacy spoke so freely. It doesn't seem like him. I used to know him very well, but not since his marriage. I have never heard him mention his wife before this."

"She seemed well this morning."

"I wonder" — then she spoke rapidly — "I wonder if this trouble of Cousin Lily's has had anything to do with it. Mrs. Rossiter has been going to see Lily every day. I have supposed

she must be a patient, as it seemed a strange intimacy. But then — ”

She had intended to say that Lily had become strange in many ways, but something deterred her. She looked at him calmly. Lucille had an even manner. Sometimes she seemed almost like a mechanism moved by reason from behind — even to herself. A moment before she had felt that Richards was almost hers again, — not now, all at once, but presently. They were such good friends. But she knew better now. The mention of Lily's name put a new atmosphere into the room.

After he had gone, Lucille bent before the gas logs for a moment before she turned the screw which left the fireplace blank and gray.

“ He's dead in love with her — yet,” she said.

CHAPTER XXIX.

SOME days later, when the Beale family were at dinner, Kate brought in a large perfumed card, bearing the name of Mrs. Eliza Leftwick, and gave it to Lily.

"If she's going to call, I should think she'd have sense enough to call on mamma," Jerry sniffed. The ways of social life were just beginning to take on the importance of immutable laws to Geraldine.

"Excuse me, mother," Lily said. "I think Mrs. Leftwick wants to see me upon some business."

"It is to be hoped so. I can think of no other reason for her calling," Mrs. Beale said, her face a little flushed.

When Lily went into the reception-room it was to greet a large, perspiring lady wrapped in sables, notwithstanding the thaw in the air. Johnny had given her the sables for a Christmas present, and Mrs. Leftwick would have considered herself ungrateful had she not shown everybody this token of his goodness to her. But

Mrs. Leftwick had forgotten even Johnny for the moment.

"I mus' jes' ast you when you seen poor little Mrs. Rossiter?"

"Why," Lily said, "not for days. She was getting so much better, I told her to come only when she felt like it. If she could forget her trouble and fear for a day, so much the better."

"They are a-goin' to operate on her."

"Why — she is getting well."

"Yes, but her husband, he's found out she's sick, and he's jes' bent on an operation. They've got a trained nurse down there because she is so hysterical, they tole me. And she goes to the hospital to-day, to be operated on to-morrow."

"There must be some mistake."

"No, there ain't. I went to the sewing-machine store, and that Miss Munn, that runs it, — she boards down there, — she tole me all about it. The nurse tole her." There were tears on Mrs. Leftwick's fat cheeks.

"I went right down there, an' I telephoned Johnny to have Rossiter let off. But they wouldn't let me see her. They said she was not well enough to see anybody, but I could hear her cryin'." Mrs. Leftwick wiped her eyes.

"I will go. Surely when I tell them I have been treating her they will let me see her."

"I ain't so sure." Mrs. Leftwick wiped her red eyes again on a real lace handkerchief, then noticed what she was doing, and took a plain one from her muff for use, and stuck the lace one back in the front of her dress, — another badge of Johnny's goodness to his old mother.

"I'm a'goin'-a have Johnny have the laws of this here State changed. They ain't no good at all. If you can get to her, honey, you go, but you'd better say nothin' 'tall 'bout treatment. Your pappy will jes' have to pay another fine."

Lily stood thinking.

"She is going to the hospital. I think I can see her in the hospital. Surely when I tell them what she was, and how much better she is, they will try our treatment, even if they take her somewhere else. They wouldn't let the poor child go through all that misery unnecessarily."

"They sent back the book I sent her. Rossiter wrote sech a mean letter I tore it right up. I wouldn't have let Johnny seen it fer nothing. I'd 'a' been afraid he'd discharge Rossiter."

Judge Beale came into the room and greeted the visitor with his usual politeness. The tears which she was still mopping away could not be ignored. She made no pretence to hide them, and Judge Beale gave some expression of sympathy for her grief, whatever it was.

"It's jes' a pore lamb that's in trouble," she

said. "But the Bible says, 'God tempers the wind to the shorn lamb.'" Then she remembered that Judge Beale was supposed to know everything.

"I've looked for that Bible passage everywhere," she said. "If you could tell me where to find it, I'd be obleeged."

"I think," said the Judge, gravely, "that you will find it in the writings of Mr. Laurence Sterne."

"Ain't it in the Bible at all?"

"I think not."

"Well, it ought to be. Sterne sounds like a Jewish name. I know it ain't charity, but Jews ain't dear to me."

"I don't think Mr. Sterne was a Jew," the Judge said. "At least no more than the men were who wrote the Bible."

After Mrs. Leftwick had gone his lips took on an amused curve as he looked at his daughter. She had no answering smile.

"That is one of the best women that ever lived. If you knew her, I am sure you would say so. Probably St. John never heard of Homer. But, father, I want to ask you something. If a person could be saved by my healing — I *can* heal the sick — must I let them die on account of the law?"

Her father was tempted, but as he looked at

her something of the feeling she had given him in the court-room a few days before, came to him, something born of his defence of her, of his belief in her, of the conviction which it was part of her lovely gift to carry always with her, of the fact that she was his daughter and could not be far wrong, came and controlled him, making him gentle.

"There is no law against your comforting any poor shorn lamb — any child or woman. But you are not a physician, you are an ignorant young girl. You must not oppose a physician."

"I have never done that. But a physician cannot cure. It is the mind that cures, after all."

"I confess to an abiding faith in quinine — particularly in this climate."

"Granted, and it consequently 'cures' you!" Lily said, triumphantly, as she went up-stairs.

She put on her hat at once and went down to see Mrs. Rossiter, carrying a bunch of sweet narcissus from the conservatory. The nurse from the hospital, lately come from a great training school in the North, had a supercilious smile on her thin lips as she denied entrance to Miss Beale. That had been her first order from Rossiter. The spring flowers she put in Mrs. Allaire's bathroom. There was no need to disturb Mrs. Rossiter by telling her anything about them.

Poor Maybelle was in a pitiful agony of fear

of an operation, her mind dwelling upon that dreadful red lump until it throbbed and ached, remembering that her mother had had operation after operation, the last one leaving a wound which never healed, and all the long years when she had been kept home from school day after day because they feared her mother was dying. She could smell again the iodoform, and hear the moans. Then she would bury her head in the pillow and bite her lips until they bled.

After Doctor Richards had examined her that night, and pronounced the growth malignant, he had called in every responsible colleague in town. They had agreed that the operation must be performed at once. Maybelle sent for Doctor Richards once, when her husband was away, and asked him if they couldn't put it off a little while.

"Let Miss Lily try a little while to cure it, just a little while," she pleaded.

"But you tell me she did try it a little while."

"It was getting better. Truly, it was. It was smaller."

"You thought it was, but that was impossible," Richards said.

He was very tender with her. He wished with all his heart that he could turn her over to Lily. He even mentioned to her husband that it would do no harm to let her see Miss Beale. But DeLacy's face set like a plaster mask.

"You tell me that every day means something. She might have been more certain of cure if you had had her at first. No. I will have no nonsense. You don't believe in this religious gibberish, do you?"

"I believe in the knife for your wife's disease."

"Well, I expect you to do the thing that will cure her." DeLacy spent all of his time at home. He was even unconscious that it was through Leftwick that this was made easy for him. He felt that if Maybelle died, he would kill somebody. And all day he told Maybelle that the only way to cure her, was Doctor Richards's way.

It wouldn't hurt her. The surgeons knew everything now. She would simply go to sleep and it would all be over at once. When she awakened she would practically be well.

"But mamma wasn't."

"They know more now than they did then," DeLacy would say, but at his heart, too, the awful fear was tugging. He couldn't lose Maybelle.

"Oh, Lacy!" she would cry in the night. "*Please* don't send me to the hospital. *Please* don't! I am so afraid. I want Miss Lily. She can cure me. She was curing me. *Why* did I ever tell you! If she knew, I know if she knew, she would come down here and tell you."

"She deceived you. She is not a good woman. She deceived you, Maybelle."

"But it was going away, and now it's coming back."

The nurse told how poor Mrs. Rossiter's mind had been fairly wrecked by Christian Science as practised by Miss Beale, and presently, that last day, how they were obliged to put her under the influence of morphine to get her to go to the hospital.

"It's wicked for those fanatics to hold out those false hopes and say such things about doctors," the nurse said to Miss Munn. "If nobody had ever told that poor woman that there was any hope for her but the knife, she would be resigned. I don't think myself that she's going to get through it, or if she gets through this operation that it will do one bit of good. I've seen too many of these malignant, hereditary cancers. They're incurable, anyway you can fix it. Of course the thing's got to come out at once. That's her only chance. It grows fast. It is seldom you see a cancer patient who doesn't go to the operating-room like a lamb."

The evening Maybelle went to the hospital (it was several days before they could get her in a condition to go), Lily called Doctor Richards up on the telephone and asked him to call at her home.

It seemed ages to them both since he had sat there in the big velvet chair with the red cushions behind his head, which brought out his strong face in relief. And yet it had been a matter of a very few weeks of time since they had sat there, hovering on the verge of a betrothal, hesitating only because the present time was so sweet.

Lily always wore white in the house when she dressed for the evening. She was more majestic, older, than she had been that night when she had told him of her aunt's recovery, and from which he dated all the change. And Richards, his heart bowing down to her, acknowledged that something had come to her. That girl whom he had loved for a little while after that night, with the tolerance of a guide, was there no more. There was a wonderful grave power in this girl's eyes, in the movements of her long, graceful body. Whatever you might think of her views, you could not speak of them with disrespect before her.

"I sent for you —" she began.

"And I was only too glad to come," he interrupted.

"About poor little Maybelle Rossiter. Of course I know that you cannot believe that I did her any good. I know that there is no hope that I may be allowed to see her. But there is one

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thing I want to ask you. Let me be present at that operation."

"Impossible!" Richards cried. "It would be too much for you. You could not stand it. It is an unpleasant operation — and I tell you frankly I fear she will die under it. She is not strong. This terrible disease permeates her whole system. She inherited it. It was born in her, and she is weakened by it at every point."

"Then why do you take the poor frightened child to almost certain death?"

"Because this is almost certain death, and anything else is death. If the operation is not performed, she will die. It is a rapidly growing, very malignant growth."

"I promise that I can stand it. May I come?"

"You would only disturb her. It is going to be a dreadful task to give her chloroform. She is in a state of panic. If she sees you, knows that you are there, it will be almost impossible."

"She need not know I am there."

Richards looked at her uneasily. "Isn't this a rather morbid wish?"

"No. I want to be there to speak to that Life that is hers, to the real self of the child. It is an innocent, sinless little self. I want to show it, when to your sense she lies there unconscious, that it can control the flesh even under

the knife, and bring her body out what you will call alive. I want to do that."

"You will not see her until she is under the influence of the chloroform?" he asked, tentatively giving way.

"No." Her eyes were shining.

"And you will go away before she recovers?"

"I will go away when you send me."

"The other doctors would object, and frankly, Rossiter would go mad if you were there."

"And he knew it beforehand."

"But, Lily," — he forgot that he had said "Miss Beale" when he entered, — "I fear that Mrs. Rossiter will die under the operation. Rossiter is wild with unreasoning anger against you now. If you are there when she dies, he will be like a madman."

"Will you let me come?"

"Does your father think you should come?"

"My father told me that if there was any woman or child that I could comfort, I had his permission. Surely you, who profess to believe that I can do no good, cannot believe that I could harm your patient. If I am nothing, why object to my standing by while you do your work? I promise not to speak one word to you."

"If you care to come and see the operation, you may," he said at last. "Rossiter will not be there. Probably he need never know you were

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there. My head nurse, whom I can trust, will let you into the operating-room. I will speak to the doctors." He hesitated, and then he said, "Lily, is it to be always like this between us? I wish you would let me say to-morrow that you are my promised wife, that you have a right to see me do my work if you wish it." He was standing now.

"When you come to understand, it will be so," she said, and she put out her hand.

"How can I believe that you can truly transform others when I cannot understand?"

"Do you want to understand?"

"I want anything that will bring you to me."

"No. You do not want to see that your profession is one which creates disease instead of healing it. You do not want to go counter to the whole world, to have generations go by before they come to see that we know the truth. When you want that, when you are ready to give that, you will understand. Now you are like that rich young man, who was told to sell all his substance and give it to the poor. You are not ready to do that yet."

CHAPTER XXX.

THE Stevensburg hospital was one of the things which proved to the inhabitants that the one-time village had grown to be a city. It was of red brick with white stone trimmings, and it sat up on a shadeless hill, bald and bare, as though it had been bathed in disinfectants. Inside there was a clean carbolic smell everywhere, pleasant enough except to those who came to it with the knowledge that they were to be vivisected there.

To Maybelle Rossiter the very name of a hospital had brought a lifelong shudder. She had begged that, if the operation must be, it might be performed at Mrs. Billings's. Her father had sold his little home and had gone West after her marriage, so that the boarding-house was her only home. Mrs. Allaire, in the kindness of her heart, would have torn her house to pieces and dismissed every boarder to gratify Maybelle's wish to stay there, — not out of any affection for her, but out of old-fashioned tenderness for any suffering thing.

But the doctors felt that in such a critical case they must have every help, and that the hospital was the only place. So they had drugged Maybelle to get her there, half convinced already that she would never leave the place alive.

The nurse stayed with her all night, and early in the morning, half-dozing, was awakened by a little cry, and saw Maybelle sitting up in bed. "Am I in the hospital?" she began, with pale lips. "Are they going to — do *that* now? I won't have it done! Where's Lacy? I want Lacy!" She was panting like a trapped bird. Lacy, lying down in the next room, came to her and soothed her in his arms.

"There, now," he said, "it's all right. Nothing is going to hurt you. See if you can't go to sleep again." Rossiter was developing a tenderness that may have been lying dormant in the Rossiter race. It had never shown in a Rossiter before. And he was so lost in his sorrow that he never knew that it had come to him.

"Lacy," she whispered, "you won't let them do it, will you? I shall die if they do. Let me stay with you a little longer, won't you, Lacy? They did it to poor mamma, and it didn't do any good."

Rossiter had to press his lips together to keep the groan back that came to them. The doctors had been frank with him. They had told him

how bare a chance she had. He felt that if she died, he wouldn't be able to stand it to remember these last pleading words. He thought that he would kill himself. He wondered if it would comfort her any to tell her so — and then he remembered that he must not suggest dying to her.

"Everything will be all right. You are going to be all well. It is nothing. Here, the nurse has brought you a drink." He held the glass to her lips.

"It isn't to make me sleep, now, so I won't know?" She looked at the glass with suspicion.

"No. It is just a drink."

He held her until, under the influence of the sedative, she slept again, convulsively clinging to his hand.

"I don't know how we are going to give her the chloroform," the nurse whispered. "I don't think you had better stay then."

"I shall stay as long as she wants me." He felt as though it were the day of his own execution. He went back to his room to dress himself fully, and the nurse slipped into the long, white hall.

Rossiter heard a noise, and turned just in time to see a white figure flit past the door between his room and Maybelle's and make for the window. His mind and body seemed to work like lightning, and it was by a miracle that he was able to snatch

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at Maybelle's gown and hold her over the stone steps below, where, but for his instant action, she would be lying now, bleeding and crushed. When they had brought her back half-fainting, she broke into hysterical weeping.

"I'm afraid. I'd rather die now, myself, than have them kill me. I *know* I can't get well. Nobody could cure me but Miss Lily."

DeLacy went for Doctor Richards.

"Must you?" he asked, huskily. "She is so afraid. Can't you put it off?"

"Rossiter," Richards said, and he began to like the man in his trouble, "*it has to be done*. If there was any other way, do you think I would try this one? The sooner it is done the better."

"But will she get well?"

Richards was silent.

"You think she will die?"

"If I thought she would surely die under this operation, I would not perform it. She has a chance. But this cancer is developing right over an artery. In a very little while it will be too late to hope to do anything. Science has exhausted every hope in these things. Your wife is very young. This *may* cure her."

At ten o'clock the doctors came and filed solemnly into the operating-room. Those who were to assist had changed their coats for long linen garments fastened in the back. The operat-

ing-table stood in the centre of the room with all its gruesome appliances. Here was the altar which is raised in every city, and these its high priests, who come daily to sacrifice human victims upon it, in the name of that blind idol, Human Science, while the pitiful God looks on and wonders when his children will know that his Life is theirs, and that he keeps his promises.

All through the rooms could be heard the shrieks, the pleading of poor little unrestrained Maybelle, as she fought for her last breath before the strangling ether had done its work, and then two strong nurses bore her into the room wrapped in a sheet, and laid her gently down on the table. The doctors sprang forward to put the straps about the tender limbs to hold her fast, but they stopped for one bewildered moment. Lily Beale had come forward and stood by Maybelle's side.

"You must not!" Richards began in his astonishment and grief. He let the strap in his hand fall, he hardly knew why. None of them were ever able to tell a curious community exactly what happened, or how. They gave various accounts many times. They all saw the inert Maybelle start into life and open her eyes.

"Quick! Give me the anesthetic!" Richards said. The horror of his blunder was in his voice. But before it reached him in the nurse's hand, Maybelle sat up. Her face was rosy and smiling

as that of a child coming out of healthful sleep. Her eyes were on Lily, as though she had expected to find her there.

"I knew you would cure me if they would let you." She threw herself into Lily's arms, and although Richards tried to take her away, she held her fast.

"They don't have to do it! They don't have to do it," Maybelle cried, over and over.

"You must not. Please go," Richards said. He was sick with the folly of what he had done in allowing her to come there. His lean face was pale, and when he heard one doctor say to another, "That poor Beale girl is crazy. What do they mean by allowing her in here? What lunatic let her in?" he almost agreed with him.

"This is an awful thing for Beale," another said.

"How did Richards come to make such a fool of himself in giving an anesthetic?"

"I have always said that it was a mistake to try to give it in the bed."

"Some mistake has been made. She had no anesthetic."

The doctors, older men all of them, a little amused at the embarrassment of the young man who had had a training none of them had enjoyed, and who had as a consequence taken the cream of the town's practice, talked to each other.

"You must go away," Richards said to Lily. "We must do our work. You are making it harder for her. You must go." With his powerful hands he separated them. Lily stood aside calmly enough, but Maybelle sat up and threw her round, naked arm above her head.

"Look!" she exulted, her voice thrilling in its joy. "It's *well*. Can't you see? I don't need to be cut. You can't do it. There isn't anything there. I'm *well*! Lacy!" she called at the top of her voice.

"What are we to do?" one doctor asked, stepping up to Richards, who was looking at the place where this morning had been the cruel, angry growth on the white flesh.

"Touch that place and tell me what is there," Richards said. There was sweat on his brow. He couldn't believe his own eyes.

Maybelle, brilliant, triumphant, drew the sheet about her and held up her arm.

"This must be the wrong side," the doctor said, shortly.

They all came up now.

They pinched and probed and pulled, but there was only a healthy girl, laughing, calling her husband, who cowered outside in the hall, his head in his hands, believing that he heard only the ravings of one under the influence of an anesthetic. They had warned him of that.

"God!" he was saying, "God!" He hadn't prayed since he was a little boy.

"Well," the oldest of the doctors said, finally, "you have fooled us all, Mrs. Rossiter. I have heard that hysteria could simulate even a cancer, but I never believed it before. The books are right."

Going down the hill to laugh at "Richards's cancer patient," as though not one of them had ever seen the case before, they agreed that Lily Beale was a theatrical girl, and that her father ought to "attend to her."

"Of course, she has some of that hypnotic power Charcot experimented in. She put that hysterical notion into that fool Rossiter woman's head, and then awakened her out of it."

"It seems to me she must have hypnotised Richards pretty well to have gotten in there."

"Well, by ginger, I've enjoyed the theatricals almost as much as I would a good operation," the oldest doctor said.

CHAPTER XXXI.

JANUARY brought to the Ohio valley one of the great snows which caused Eastern Kentuckians to consider their State a part of the Arctic regions, as the terrible heats of summer seem to place it in the line of the Equator. The climate is like the moods of a spoiled child, with a charming natural disposition. The little girl with the curl in the middle of her forehead should be the weather saint of the Ohio valley. The natives say that if everything happened from November to September, they would stand it all for the pure joy of living through October; but it is difficult to remember Indian summer in January. Trees broke under the weight of the soft white blanket, and then there came a hard freeze which kept the country ice-bound for weeks. The oldest inhabitants shook their heads, and told of the things that would happen unless the break-up was gradual, but then the break-up was usually gradual, and life went along merrily for the merry, and sadly for the sad, as everywhere else.

Miss Catherine Beale had joined Mrs. Long-

more and her son, at Mrs. Longmore's earnest request, and they were in Southern California.

"I feel sometimes as though I should come back to help you, to tell everybody what you have done for us, but everybody must know," Mrs. Longmore wrote. "And oh, Lily, I am so *happy*! Cathie and I catch each other's hands and laugh for pure joy sometimes, like a pair of children. I understand so many things now. I seem to have the master key which unlocks mysteries. One of them is the meaning of 'Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child.' All the darkness, the cynical disbelief in happiness which clouded my life has gone. You, having come into the birthright so young, can never know what it means to look out on life with the belief that there is no happiness. To believe that there is no happiness is to believe that there is no God. When I saw people smiling, I wondered what heartache they were hiding. And now, I know, I *know* that the supreme joy is there, is here, waiting for us to take it, to put ourselves in that harmony which makes all things work together for our good. Did you ever think what 'all things' stands for? We are part of the very Good, ourselves. Lily, I want to come home for one thing. I want you to see Robert. Surely he is being made in God's image if ever man was. His very features have changed, to

show more plainly the strong spirit within. And you did it! You awakened in him his real self, just so surely as Lazarus was awakened from the dead.

“There is one wonderful thing. In our travels we find our own kind everywhere. Out here in the West, in this fresh, new country, full of hope, the truth seems to find fruitful soil. And our own people find us out, or we find them out, by a sort of involuntary attraction. We roll together as naturally as globules of quicksilver shaken on a table.”

Lily put this letter down with new strength. Over all the miles the good she had given out came back to her on the current established by a common understanding. In what corner of the earth could she be alone, or unsuccoured, with the whole universe working together for her good? Her heart thrilled at the magnificence of the thing which those about her were denying.

“Why don’t they try to understand?” she said to herself. “They must know that it could not hurt them to try, and the reward is so great.”

Judge Beale had begun to look at his daughter from a new point of view. She had become a study to him. Added to the little row of books behind the old law books in the library down-town there was another, a small black book which had come from Boston. And Judge Beale read

it with a curiosity which began with a cynical amusement, and went on with something he did not define to himself.

One day his wife broke her silence upon the subject of Lily. Words had long been inadequate for Mrs. Beale to express her indignation. She had the pride of one who suffers an unmentionable indignity. Lily was as gay, as tender, as helpful as ever. There was no spot where she could complain of her, except the notoriety which had fastened upon the house. Even that was becoming in some measure an old story — something accepted. The Rossiter family, both the clever men and the plain, narrow women, sneered anew at DeLacy, for DeLacy knew that it was not hysteria which had brought his wife to the gates of death, and when she came back to him he did not question the means which had brought her back. Perhaps that dumb call upon his God there in the hospital hall had had an answer in the touch upon his eyes which opened them to allow the light to enter.

The oldest of the doctors, who had been the Rossiters' family physician for a generation, called upon him to tell him that his wife was very susceptible to influences, and that he had written up her case for the medical journals as one of remarkable hysteria morbidly aroused.

"You should keep her away from the morbid

influence of Roger Beale's daughter," he had said. "Curious how young women get notions in their heads nowadays. What they need is something to do."

"My wife's mother had something to do, and she died of one of those notions, because there was nobody to awaken her out of it. Your ideas and ours" (DeLacy was saying "ours," now) "agree exactly. Sickness is just a 'notion,' but it needs the right thing to destroy it."

"God bless me!" the old doctor cried, "do you mean to say that you have taken up with this tomfiddle nonsense?"

"You see," DeLacy answered, "she is my wife. She was just a patient to you. That makes a lot of difference. Although how a man can see a miracle performed before his very eyes and be blind to it, I don't know."

"Now, my dear Lacy, it was simply the working out of a natural law. The medical books have noticed those cases."

"Then all I have to say is that the doctors who have seen them show very little practical sense in not seeking for the law which works these cures, instead of cutting people into pieces."

"They do. I assure you they do. But it is very difficult to discriminate between a hysterical manifestation and a true disease."

"Well, my wife is too precious to take chances

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with men who confess that they *may* be fighting shadows, and who do not know a shadow when they see one. I know nothing about the laws which cured Maybelle, but I am going to learn. My mind is scientific enough to know that a result such as I have seen is governed by an inflexible law. It wasn't a matter of pure chance. This universe isn't run on those principles."

And then the Rossiters and their friends said that poor Lacy had capped his eccentricities.

"Once," his mother said, "I was sure that we were making him understand what a mistake he had made in marrying that common girl. In time we could have made him see his marriage in its right light. But his mind has deteriorated. He has even taken up with that folly Catherine Beale brought home. If this thing keeps on, there will have to be an extension to our lunatic asylums. They say we have more lunatics now, according to population, than any other State in the Union."

This remark, transmuted, built upon, became the text for an article in the *Maurilla Question*, in which a "prominent citizen" of Stevensburg spoke of the terrible effects of Christian Science upon the minds of the people, and called attention to the insanity statistics in East Kentucky, as showing the new religion's tendency to create lunatics.

Mrs. Beale felt that her home was being desecrated by the people who came to it. Notoriety was bad enough, but she could ignore that. When she saw Maybelle Rossiter and her husband there, and when Lily took Lyddy Sawyer into the library to talk to her "as though she had been a guest," Mrs. Beale protested to her husband.

Judge Beale listened.

"There is one thing we must understand. Lily is a woman, and as a woman she has a perfect right to her opinions. The world would stand still if we repressed our children."

"You have changed your mind rather suddenly," his wife said. "Or is this one of your jokes? If it is, I can only say that it is in bad taste."

The Judge laughed. "Maybe Lily has been treating me for obstinacy. At any rate, she is too serious and fine a woman for me to meddle with her. I did seriously object to her being mixed up in Longmore's affairs, but Longmore has gone. I can't see how her kindness to a lot of poor devils is going to injure anybody."

"Well, it has injured Doctor Richards, and I should think she would be ashamed of herself. People are laughing at him for diagnosing that case mistakenly. Of course that was all there was to it."

The Judge was quizzical.

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"Ashamed of herself because she didn't let him cut up Rossiter's wife? Isn't that carrying prejudice a bit far?"

"She had no business at the hospital at all," Mrs. Beale said. It was the final word, whether it was logical or not.

Among Lily's objectionable visitors was one who came one hard February night when Lily and old Ann were alone in the house. Judge Beale and his wife had taken Jack and Jerry to introduce them to Jefferson in "Rip Van Winkle," along with the rest of the town.

"I'm thinkin' it's no leddy, but a pore creature," old Ann said, "fer all she's got a fur coat."

When Lily went into the library she found a large woman, who had thrown back her fur coat and pushed the thick veil she wore, up above her brilliant blue eyes. The cheeks below them were red and a little bloated, while around the short nose and the mouth were lines which marked the woman as with a branding-iron.

She did not rise, but continued to look about.

"You've kept some of the old furniture, I see, in fixing up your new house."

"Yes," Lily said, puzzled.

"Oh, I've been in your mother's house a good many times, although not for some years." She turned her eyes on Lily. "You were a child at the time. You don't remember me. I'll wager

your friend Laura Shepperson never spoke of her cousin Serena Payne."

A faint colour came into Lily's cheeks. She was not the sort of girl to whom even the other schoolgirls had told vicious gossip, when they had known it, but there are some subjects which children learn instinctively to avoid, and Serena Payne had been one of them. When Mrs. Lionel Shepperson died, Lily had gone to the funeral, and she had heard her mother say that she hoped Serena Payne would have the decency not to come.

Vaguely she knew that Serena Payne was back in the town — and in the mists of the unknowable, — those poisonous mists which seemed to settle along the river.

"I think," Lily said, calmly, "that I know who you are. I remember your mother very well."

The woman's face was crossed by almost a humourous look.

"See here, if you are one of the mother, home, and heaven kind, I might as well go on. The slummers have that patter down fine. My Lord! I learned to do that myself. You wouldn't believe that I had a class in the mission school once?"

"Yes," Lily said. "I have one myself."

"Do they let a young lady that's been arrested

keep it? Aren't they afraid of the influence on the lower classes? Times must have changed since my day."

She sat staring. She seemed to want to provoke Lily into asking why she was there, but the clear-eyed girl knew, and in her heart she was praying, praying, that this devil-posessed one might stay.

"They haven't asked me to give it up."

"No, nor I reckon they won't as long as Judge Beale half-supports their dry-rotten old church. But they hate you all the same. You are a scandal — just as I am. Everybody knows that." She laughed. "Oh, I hear everything, — how you straightened up Bob Longmore, and all the rest of it. Bob was certainly pretty far gone. If you've done that — well, you can do anything. Now, what I want to know is, *how did you do it?*" She leaned forward; the corners of the coarse mouth were drawn down until the lines changed, the lips thinned.

Lily's heart trembled for fear she should make a mistake. She knew how easy that would be. She looked back at the woman as a master workman would look who had been asked to explain a machine to one who was interested in its mechanism.

"To begin with," she said, "I believe in God, and I believe in the life of Jesus Christ as it is

told in the New Testament. You were taught that as a child, just as I was."

The woman moistened her lips. For years she had met any question of a belief in the Bible with jeers and loud laughter. She had taken pleasure in the stories of the revisions of the creeds as they came to her garbled through sensational newspapers. Poorly as she had been educated, she knew so much more than the people among whom she passed her life, that she was an authority among them. They called her a "Bob Ingersoll," for to them the name of the lecturer who spent the last years of his life fighting the ghosts of beliefs long dead and buried in the pulpits, represented the very essence of revolt against law. But this plain statement of Lily's was an altogether different thing.

"I believe it," Lily went on, "just as I believe in my arithmetic. When it tells me that two and two make four, I can count and see that it is true. In the same way I can see that the promises in the New Testament are true. I have counted four." She smiled at Serena Payne.

"I know a lot of fools that can't put two and two together," Serena Payne said.

"You would know how, I am sure," Lily answered her.

"The trouble is, that they don't make you understand when you're young, that it's necessary.

They show you a two here and a two there, and they tell you to drag them together, and they expect you to go and do it. They don't tell you that your twos will scatter if you don't, and you won't have anything. They don't make you understand that that four means all you've got." The woman spoke with passion.

"It is because sometimes they do not know themselves. Most of us do our work and live our lives because somebody else tells us to. We don't know why. Why, it is genius to think the truth. It is an attribute of God himself. That is why we know that Christ was God. He thought and said what we can see is the Truth."

"How can you see it?" she asked, bluntly.

"One of the disciples asked that, and he had his answer. 'If a man love me, he will keep my words: and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. . . . If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.'"

Serena Payne drew a long breath. "And do you mean to tell me that you actually *get* what you want? Is that the way you prove it?"

"That is the way. But I am not perfect in God. In the same place Christ said that he was a vine, and we were the branches, and that we bore fruit through him. But, don't you see, I am only lately grafted on that Vine. The sap

from the Vine is new to me. I think it is wonderful that I have been allowed to show any fruit at all, so soon."

"I guess," Serena Payne said, "that I'm a rotten stick."

"A brand to snatch from the burning."

"By George!" Serena Payne said, "I never expected anybody to say that old chestnut to me in such a way that it sounded like sense." Her eyes sought Lily's face. "You said down there in the court the other day that we made ourselves, that our thoughts marked us. Well, I'm tired of my markings, and I'm tired of the things I think. Do you suppose you can do anything for me? Oh, I know." She put out her hand to stop Lily. "You can talk about reforming. The devil of it is, I can't reform. I don't know that I want to. It would be like making a woman that lies about all day in a loose gown, put on a corset and a stiff clean dress that she's afraid to muss, and setting her down—to be uncomfortable—and spit at." The last words were vicious. "If you are going to be spit at, you might as well be comfortable," she added.

"But you are not comfortable."

"No, I'm not. I'm tired. I—I *hate* myself. Sometimes I think I always hated myself. I always did the things I did, just for devilment, it seemed to me. I couldn't help it. Sometimes

I'd think I would try. I'd be pretty decent for a little while. I'd watch myself in one direction, and I'd think I was behaving pretty well. Then all at once I'd see that I'd gone just as far wrong in some other direction without noticing. When you are like me, what are you going to do? Sometimes I've thought the Catholics knew more about people than anybody else, when they built convents for people to go into and never speak another word as long as they lived. But this devil that's in me would have burst out. If you've got something that can tame it, I'd like you to try it."

"I have the promise that 'these signs shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils.'"

"Is that in the Bible?"

"'They shall lay hands on the sick and they shall recover.' That is there, too."

"Well, they never taught us that at Sunday school. I suppose they were afraid we'd ask why they didn't do it, if they believed as they said they did. It would make a cat laugh to think of Mr. Lessing getting the best of a devil — unless he bored it to death. But then," she went on, cynically, "I never heard him say that he really believed any of the stuff he preaches. His 'I believes' were always patter out of a book. But you believe now, why don't you change me? Cast the

devil out of me, make me able to be decent and respectable, and " — she took a furtive look at herself in the round mirror over the mantelpiece — "pretty again?"

"And make you forget!" The words came from Lily's lips in a tone which caused the woman to spring from her chair. She looked at the girl, and the red died out of her face, and something harsh, something horrible, something that seemed to live behind the mask of face which it was transforming into something as dreadful as itself, flew like a cat to the windows of the eyes, and made a veritable devil of the woman.

The gentle young saint had gone from Lily. Here was the spirit which lashed the money-changers in the Temple, the militant spirit which put on armour against the powers of darkness.

"See here," Serena Payne's voice said, furiously. "None of that hypnotism business on *me!*" She leaned forward, tense with passion. "Do you think you can get the best of *me?*" Her tones had changed. A volley of abuse came from her lips, horrible words, unspeakable vile-ness of which Lily understood not one word in ten. "I came up here to see what kind of a woman it was that Bob Longmore would behave himself for. Oh, I've heard of your tight-rope walking on the edges. You are no better than

the rest of us, but you are playing a new trick." She broke into brutal laughter.

"No," Lily said, and she sat still in her chair, Serena Payne leaning over her. "You did not come for that. You came" — her eyes were stern — "when your devil was asleep."

The two pairs of blue eyes gazed at each other, those which shone with the light of Heaven and those behind which glared the very fiend from the pit.

"Why do you keep it there? You have a right to live your life clean. If you help me now, if you try, that black spirit that is usurping your life, must go."

Serena Payne's mouth moved, her face was distorted. She had taken off her gloves, and her fingers worked against her palms. She put her hand up to her collar, the tawdry collar of gilt embroidery, as if to loosen it, and in the eyes cowered a new aspect of the unclean beast — *fear!*

And then into the room came the noise of an opening door, the cheerful voices of the family coming home from the theatre. Before Lily could move, her mother was in the room. Mrs. Beale, tall and handsome in her furs, ruddy with the frost, her lips parted over her pretty white teeth, might have stood for convention. She came in almost facing the convulsed creature whom that awful struggle between Death and Life was tear-

ing. For an instant she looked in wonder, and then she recognised Serena Payne. There was no deliberation now. Anger swept a clear red over her brow and chin.

"Lily," she said, "what is this woman doing here?" Then she thought that Lily could not know, and she turned to Serena Payne. "How dare you come into this house? Leave it at once. No!" as Serena, recovering herself and putting on the old swagger as a garment, started toward the door through which she had entered. "Go by the back door. At least have the decency not to show yourself to my children."

Serena stopped and looked at Lily. "The first thing for you to do, is to try and get the Old Nick out of your mother, my *dear*." The endearment was flung as a taunt. She accented it by a slam of the door.

Mrs. Beale was trembling. "Lily," she said, "you have gone one step too far. If you imagine that I am going to allow you to bring disreputable women into this house for your brother and sister to see here, you are mistaken. This is still my house. I am its mistress. Your father, out of foolish indulgence, may condone your folly, but I shall not. You seem to have been changed from a modest, dutiful daughter, to a foolish, wrong-headed girl, carried away by her own conceit.

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You are ruining your own life, you have disgraced us all."

"Mother, mother," Lily said, "let me tell you about that poor woman."

"Let you tell me about a creature whose existence should be unknown to you?" She shook off Lily's hand. "I have shown a patience which amazes me. You prate of duty, when you are a disobedient daughter. You are ruining your home. I shall no longer allow it. I forbid you. Do you understand me? I forbid your having anything more to do with these people or this crazy religious mania of yours."

"Mamma," Lily said, "you are not yourself. You cannot wish to speak to me like that."

"If I had spoken like this earlier and oftener, I should not be ashamed of my eldest daughter now. You were my pride, and now I am *ashamed* of you." Mrs. Beale's face was hard. All that her pride had suffered in these weeks she was trying to give back, measure for measure. All the questions she had parried, all the curious looks, every line in the newspapers that had burned into her, were speaking now.

"I cannot promise to give up my faith, nor promise not to try to help others. I am sorry you feel it so — but — Oh, mamma, you will come to see. We all will."

“I would rather see every member of my family dead than see another of them in the grasp of this insane folly,” and Mrs. Beale opened the door and went out.

CHAPTER XXXII.

IN one February day the thermometer hanging in Judge Beale's veranda raced up sixty degrees. The snow and ice which had covered the ground became pools of water, and the white blankets that had covered the roofs came down in sheets from the eaves, while a mist wreathed its way up from the flats. The following night one of the rare winter thunderstorms crashed its way over the back country, and by morning the Mawawa, which emptied into the Ohio, was a roaring torrent, bearing down trees, log booms, chicken-coops, and all the flotsam that lined the banks of the little tributary runs and creeks. The Ohio began to show signs of rising, and there were stories that the river was "up at Pittsburg, and rising."

When the sensational *Maurilla Question* arrived in the afternoon, it told stories of panic all along the way, from the source to the mouth, but the *Maurilla Question* cried "wolf" from one year's end to the other. Although Stevensburg knew the force of a sudden flood, it knew

it as a memory. The new people heard the old inhabitants tell stories of boating through the streets, as they heard stories of the occupation during the war. One was more remote than the other, but both were in the past. Stevensburg is built on terraces above the river, and the residence part of the town in these days is high and dry on hills; but the old town, where a few families lingered, the business streets, and the great new district over the tracks lay ready for the first great spread of the waters out of the Ohio's banks.

The second warm day the down-town people called to each other the exciting joke of possible danger. Once upon a time people down there had been obliged to move into the second stories of their houses, — but a new population in new houses heard it as a legend.

When the water finally rose into the engine-rooms of the new manufactories along the river, the workmen looked upon the yellow stream as a friend that was giving them a holiday by gently pushing them out into the balmy air. They went down-town into those streets still fringing the river, but on a first terrace, where places had been created for men to enjoy themselves on a holiday.

The old houses here were the mansions of the first days of the town, with here and there an

outgrown shell of a trade that had moved away from the river when it ceased to be the only highway.

These old houses had been taken possession of by a motley army that always hangs in the rear to catch the laggards. Drinking-saloons were behind every other doorway. Dingy old houses, more disgraceful on account of their marks of former dignity, close-shuttered, as though their interiors were echoing emptiness, were looked at askance, and spoken of as holding undreamed-of splendours. It was in one of these old houses that Serena Payne lived, her windows looking down on the cobble-paved wharf where steamboats had clustered in the busy days of the river, before the railroads. Nowadays one or two steamboats came in, poor little degenerate descendants of the white and gold swans that used to float in here to the song of the steam calliope. Where "*The Wild Wagoner*" and the "*Robert E. Lee*" had once touched, summer brought a row of house-boats, tramps of the inland waters, floating down with the season, and getting a tow back in the spring. Sometimes one or two tied up here for the winter.

The one with whose inhabitants Serena Payne had had the trouble which took her into the court-room was one of these. All winter the one-roomed boat had contained three families,

so inextricably related that they themselves did not know where one family ended as a unit. These people generally know less of our moral code than the dogs that live with us. A marriage ceremony is almost unknown, a "stuck-up" luxury, and they will tell you with entire good faith that they go up and down the river to live upon the corn and melons, vegetables, and chickens of the farms. They have no sense of wrong in taking what is there before them, as unprotected in the open fields as the air they breathe and the water they dip up from the river. They know it is inexpedient to be caught, but the Southern farmer is lenient, and is not likely to make much of an armful of roasting ears. He drives the house-boaters away when he can, and gives them no further thought. If you were to suggest that they stood in need of missionaries a trifle more than the Chinese, he would think you a "crank." "There is the church; why don't they go? They've got the same chance I have."

All winter Serena Payne had looked down the cobble-stone wharf and seen the men and women coming and going from the house-boat, but a few days before the break in the weather they had all disappeared, except one poor anæmic creature who sunned herself outside, sometimes with a puny baby in her arms. The other children, four shrinking little creatures who hardly

knew their own parents, were left with her. The first rise in the Mawawa sent the boat higher on the bank. By the third day the Ohio had come rushing down, and floated it over the cobblestones until it was stopped by the two leprous sycamore-trees which grew out from the old Coxe garden, their young roots having pushed under the wall a generation or two ago. The house-boaters had tied their craft to these trees by a network of ropes, so that no sudden flood could carry it away. The brick wall of the Coxe place had figured in one of the stories of long ago. Serena Payne's house had been built by a river-captain in the great days of the river, and he had had one pretty daughter. The Coxe family, who had built a mansion here long before a town was dreamed of, had made that end of their garden wall very high, for the river-captain's small back yard ran down abruptly. It left the wall almost even with the captain's back porch roof, and the space between them narrow at the corner.

One night a young Coxe fell, the family said, from the wall's top: agitated whispers repeated, from the veranda roof. At any rate, it was midnight, and his back was broken there in the captain's back yard. Tradition has given the captain's pretty daughter all sorts of fates. A mad-house was in the most popular version a genera-

tion later, when the Coxe garden was a deserted tangle, and the captain and his boats had gone like the Flying Dutchman.

Serena Payne's corner bedroom windows looked out on the back porch as well as the river. Her bed was in the corner, and she usually lay until mid-afternoon among her tawdry, cheap lace pillows, looking aimlessly out upon such life as the old wharf could show.

The day the flood swung the house-boat around almost against her house, she lay there and saw a group of sallow little creatures pushing aside her bedroom curtains on the porch side, and looking in at her with the curiosity of wild animals.

Serena had no servants. The Sheppersons had had slaves in the old days, but the traditional old nurse who follows her mistress through every trial was not known in Stevensburg. Perhaps negroes with that doglike fidelity never came so far north as East Kentucky. Not one of the Shepperson negro women would have set foot in this quarter. A half-drunken Irish woman came in to clean the house, wash the dishes, and build the fires (the natural gas pipes were not put into these derelicts of houses). And for the rest, Serena waited upon herself. A near-by restaurant sent in her meals.

When a white girl came down here, it was

usually because she wanted "to be free of working in somebody's kitchen," to be able to wear big plumed hats and a velvet dress.

Serena looked at the children devouring with their eyes the flowered wall-paper, the pink tartan draped toilet-table, the big gilt mirror, and she half started up to drive them away. Then she lay back on the pillow she had doubled together, giving a short laugh, as she patted it into shape for her neck.

"My devil seems to be in a good humour this morning." Ever since that night she had gone to Lily Beale she had referred to and consulted her "devil" with elaborate sarcasms. Day and night the thought of it had been in her mind. Sometimes the empty bottles about the room, and the swollen face on the pillow showed that the "devil" had had his way with her.

A new idea took her. She reached up, pulled down the blind, put on a dressing-gown, and went to the back door. The children had flown from the window, but they had crept up to the door and were gathering up scraps from a pail which stood there. Two of them sprang away as the door opened, but Serena's strong grasp took the others, dragged them in, scratching and pulling back, silently, like little wildcats.

Serena stirred up the fire in the parlour. It was suffocatingly hot, but this fire was only cov-

ered, and it would be necessary to build one in the kitchen otherwise. While she set the tea-kettle on the grate the children sat speechless with amazement. The velvet curtains, the piano cover, the coloured photographs were common and dusty. Serena's taste had never been fine, and she was not able now to indulge in such luxury as she knew, but to the house-boat children it was a house of wonder.

Serena, half-contemptuous of herself, went to a closet and brought out a box of sweet biscuits, and gave them to her unwilling guests. The oldest child, a boy with black eyes almost touching his nose, grabbed a handful, and ducked toward the door. Serena caught him.

"Where are you going?"

"I'm goin' take 'em to Jinny."

"Who's Jinny?"

"She's her. She ain't had nothin'."

"One of the others? Never mind, I will call them."

Serena was enjoying a novel sense of the privilege of patronage. It had been years since she had spoken to a child. "You may have all the cakes you want. I'll boil you some eggs presently."

"Jinny can't come, 'cause the kid's sick."

"Is she your sister?"

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"Naw; I ain't no sister. It's jes' Jinny's kid."

"What is the matter with it?"

"That's tellin'. 'Fore they all went they said, 'Shut up.'"

Serena half understood the boy.

"Oh, I guess you can tell me," she said, to make the child talk to her.

"It's smallpox," the other boy piped out. "But Jinny ain't go'n' say nawthin'. The' erd jes' fuss."

Smallpox had been up and down the river all winter. There had been stories of it, carrying a momentary terror into the minds of the river people, but panic would wait upon its first case. Seemingly this had come.

Serena Payne's face stiffened. Smallpox! Smallpox meant death, and disfigurement, the pest-house, quicklime probably. Who would see that she had any better fate than that?

She arose to put the children out, and then she was afraid to touch them. They had come from the house-boat, where they all lived together like pigs. She could see, she was sure, as she looked at them now, red blotches on the face of the boy already. Her eyes saw red everywhere. Of course she would have it. She might as well let them stay. She felt numbed. She did not know what to do — which way to turn.

The thought that she would have smallpox was too astounding.

A tremendous self-pity took her. She wasn't to blame. All her life everything had gone wrong. The "devil" in her had made everything go wrong, and now, when she had been charitable, this was the way she was repaid for it. *This* was the way goodness rewarded you, was it? She had fed these children, and this was what she got. She would die with the smallpox!

"Take the eggs, get out of here as fast as you can." She ran out of the room as they left it, and slammed the door with some idea of shutting the infection up in there. Then she went to the big, gilt-bordered mirror in her bedroom and looked at her face. She was trembling as she faced her reflection.

"I suppose you think, now," she said, to the intelligence behind her eyes, "that you'll take me to hell with you, do you? Well, you *won't!* You've spoiled everything for me always. You made me do things I didn't want to do. You brought me back here to this town to show what you could do with me. But, by God, you've met your match. There's somebody can manage you if I can't. You might as well get out now." She was half-insane in her excitement. "You needn't to guess she won't come. All the devils

in torment couldn't scare her." Still trembling, she went to the telephone and rang up central.

There was a flippant reply from the boy who answered her call.

"Pretty dangerous down at your place, ain't it? You want to get somebody down there to drown?"

"Give me 1673."

"Oh, say," the boy said, "I ain't going to. That's none of your kind."

"You connect me with Judge Beale's house or you'll lose your place this night," furiously.

"Oh, a' right — but you'd better be careful."

"What is it?" Mrs. Beale, sitting in the library, said, as Lily carefully put down the receiver.

Lily made an effort to speak calmly, but her voice trembled.

"A woman in trouble has asked me to come to her."

"What woman?" And as Lily did not answer, she asked again, "That Payne creature? Has she had the audacity to telephone to this house? I will have that telephone taken out! How dare she?"

"She wants me."

"You? She dares ask *you* to come to see *her*? Your father shall see that that woman

leaves this town for this. She has been a mortification to people long enough. And you answered her. Why did you answer her?"

"Because I must go to her."

Mrs. Beale opened her lips with "I forbid you" behind them, but a look at her daughter's face showed her their futility.

"And you, Lily Beale, have so little respect for your father and your mother, that you will plunge them into grief and shame at the bidding of a woman of the streets!"

"Mother, listen. There is a child down there with smallpox. Can't you see that if I refuse to go to this woman I am denying the power that has been given me? I owe it to the faith that is in me to bear witness to it."

Mrs. Beale's face had grown pale.

"You will go, for obstinacy, to bring back that infection to your family."

"Can you not see, dear, dear mother, please understand, that I cannot do that. There is no infection, there is no real disease there. I go to dispel a shadow, now, before it grows larger. It is not only to save this woman, but it is for the sake of something so much greater than anything else, — for the Truth."

"And you, Lily!" Mrs. Beale's whole soul went into the cry to her daughter, "you cannot be willing to sacrifice us to this insanity. You

are not yourself. I cannot, I shall not allow you to do this. I call upon your duty to me as a daughter. I demand obedience from you."

Lily's face flushed, and her eyes, fastened on her mother's face, were hurt and embarrassed. For the moment she was her mother's child being bitterly rebuked for a disobedience. "But," she said, "mamma, it was you who taught me — always — that one must leave everybody, when it was a duty."

"It is your duty to do what I ask you."

"Except when you ask me to be false to my own conscience. Oh, mother, *please* see that I am right. It breaks my heart to pain you. Please see that I can do nothing else. If you will drop your prejudice for a moment —"

Mrs. Beale deliberated.

"Very well, you may stay here and explain the matter to me."

"You know I must go now."

"If you go," her mother cried, "I shall send your father and your physician for you. If my child's mind is so affected that she cannot take care of herself, she shall be put under restraint. You are incapable of being at liberty."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

THERE was a cloudburst in the hills behind the Mawawa. Brooks (they do not know the word "brook" in East Kentucky; they call them "runs") and creeks became rivers, drowning out the meadows on the bottoms, and loosening from their foundations the little grist-mills that ground the county's corn. Whole families, asleep in their cabins along the way, were drowned, and the story would never reach the outside world at all, so unimportant do these people feel themselves, and so remote. Tragedies in these hills are awaiting the hand of a Maupassant to show them to a pitying world.

By the time Lily reached the street by the river the two streams were rivalling each other in the number of feet they were rising in an hour.

The Mawawa, held between hills, was a veritable mountain torrent, but the cloudburst up behind among the little streams had hardly yet begun to show its effect.

The house-boat was floating even with Serena Payne's back porch now, and brownish cakes of

river ice, unmelted in the cold water, were knocking at her steps.

Lily had taken the new trolley down here, and had attracted no notice until she left the car, and started to walk up the disreputable street on which Serena Payne's house fronted. A man coming out of a saloon saw her, and his head went forward like that of a hound who has taken a trail. Lily saw him, but did not recognise him as Abe Sawyer. She, as the pivot about which his whole family's importance had revolved for weeks, was as familiar to him as his own face. His sharp eyes lighted up with curiosity, and he dropped in behind her. There was likely to be something entertaining going on when one of the "big-bugs" came down here, but this girl was a regular magnet of interest all the time. When he saw her go into Serena Payne's house, he licked his lips with the sweet savour of the story they would have to tell. His impulse was to go back to the saloon and tell it now, but he wanted to be sure of its details. Nobody must come in with a later tale.

Two or three children chasing a shingle they had launched on the river's edge, and which was drifting before it caught the current, came from behind the house, and Abe stopped them and asked who lived there.

"Aw — you know," the biggest boy said, and went on.

"She's got treats," the smallest explained, stopping, "but —"

"You come on —" the biggest boy yelled at him. "Jinny said fer you to shut up."

"I don' haf to. She's a bad woman, Jinny said she was, but she's took th' kid in that house, an' put it in a place clean as a boiled shirt. Th' kid's got th' smallpox." He too had his excitements, and it was too much to expect that he could deny himself the pleasure of passing them on.

Now the Sawyers did not lack imagination. No sodden souls were they, and Abe's spine fairly quivered at his news. The plague of the river had come at last, and the Beale girl was hiding it — killing another child, doubtless. Abe went swiftly back to the saloon. He was tempted to call out to the groups who stood watching the rising waters. The wharf-boat, a relic of other days, had parted its moorings an hour earlier, started on a journey down the river, given a shiver and a gasp at the perils before it, and broken into pieces. Men were shaking their heads and telling stories of the great flood of '84. This was not so high — yet — but some philosophers argued that this time the water must be "stronger," because the wharf-boat had weathered that year. One excited man was carry-

ing a rifle, against the advice of everybody, into a house which he owned. He said that he did not intend to have the waves of steamboats knocking down his property, and he would shoot at the first one. Voices a block away carried in the warm moist atmosphere, mingling strangely with the roar and gurgle of the yellow flood. The bridge over the Mawawa would go next, they said.

Abe stood the pressure of his news until he reached the saloon. There were men there who knew him, and he would get the credit of his announcement. He saw himself, as he trotted along, being made a hero of, given drinks. He would mount a chair and shout out his news. But when it came to the real telling, he half whispered it to a man who stood beside him, who thought he was intoxicated, and paid no attention to him; and it was dark before he could find believers in his story, to grow excited and put it as leaven into the crowds along the river.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

WHEN a mob takes up a tale its beginnings are lost and its end unknown. The least obstruction may divert it, end it, or it may go on to the most fantastic conclusion.

Abe Sawyer never knew when the river watchers became maddened by his story. Many of the men had been first driven out of their workshops, and then this afternoon from their homes. By night their wives and children had taken refuge from the flood with friends on the high ground, if they were fortunate enough to have them, or in one of the churches which had been opened to shelter them for the night.

The Baptist Church, the nearest to the river, and one of the largest, had been the first announced as a refuge. Already in its big lecture-room was going on one of the tragi-comedies of life. Even in their hour of peril and refuge, social lines between the workmen's families, the Sawyers, and the real outcasts from the old river rookeries, were as well defined as the Chinese

wall. Some of them had brought bedding, and they were turning the floor of the smaller rooms in the church into sleeping-rooms. Charitable women were bringing bedding for those who had none, and baskets of food were pouring in. There was a kitchen in the church where oyster suppers were prepared during the winter. Mrs. Batton went about, full of outward concern for the comfort of the women and children, and secret dismay at the "mess" in the church.

The few real outcasts who had come in, in their pitiful determination not to show awe of their surroundings, were recklessly offensive of manner, and were left in a group alone. Even the little children recognised their isolation, knew that there was some barrier which made them "different." Mrs. Batton would go into her husband's study now and then to tell him a new story of the difficulties of taking care of the crowd. Once she flew in with a problem which had disturbed all the ladies who were caring for the refugees. Somebody had sent a basket addressed to a woman. They had opened it, and discovered a bottle of whiskey. Were they to keep the woman in the church any longer?

"Where is she to go?" Mr. Batton asked.

"They ought to think of those things," his wife answered, indignantly. But the woman was not disturbed.

But when the first whisper of smallpox came, Mrs. Batton had a story to disturb him.

"If it gets into the church, I'd be afraid to have you preach there, and nobody would come. With all that low-down trash in there, it is likely to break out any minute," she said, excitedly.

Mr. Batton left his desk and went over to the church immediately — his head and heart high with courage, his deep-set eyes aflame with the martyr spirit. He did not know what to say to these people, how to make them welcome here, how to give the outcasts a home feeling in the church, and fill them with respect for him and it, but he could brave danger. In this commonplace civilisation, however, it happens that tact wins more battles than heroism. Perhaps it was fortunate that his idea of conducting a prayer-meeting while the food-distributing and bed-making were going on was frustrated. As the pastor came through the church door which led from the parsonage, a girl who had put on all her finery to walk the streets through the crowds of river watchers, burst into the lecture-room screaming with excitement. She had run to get a friend to see the "fuss." Between gasps she called out that "the Beale healer" had killed another baby, and was going around spreading smallpox; that the men on the river were after her, and that she "bet the'd be a lynchin'." With a rush, the

lighter minded of the company went out into the misty night, leaving the others to look wistfully after them, and to break out into countless tales of "the Beale healer." These ranged from actual murder to spectacular pointings of her finger at wooden-legged men in the street, who suddenly grew new legs.

Down by the river the men seemed to come out of the very stones in the streets. The saloons had done a great business all day, and when supper-time came most of the men had no homes to go to. They had supped from the free lunch bowls in the saloons, and "made it up" to the proprietors by buying more beer.

The misty darkness was dotted here and there by great flaring gasoline torches along the river, set up by the men who owned the houses which were in danger, that passing boats might see and give them a wide berth. The water was over the back porch of Serena Payne's house, and creeping in over the floor in the kitchen. The front rooms and the street before it were still dry, but Lily had taken the little group gathered there up-stairs. She could not leave these helpless people who had no place to go, and she was calmly awaiting the coming of her father. She knew that he would come for her as soon as her mother's message reached him — he and Richards. She smiled a little at the covert threat in

her mother's voice when she said she would send her physician after her. As she looked at the baby asleep on the bed she smiled again.

"We'd better get out, ef it's only in th' streets," the house-boat woman had said, but Lily's assurance that they were in no danger had quieted her. She was abashed before this beautiful serene woman who was yet full of laughter and gaiety. That she was cheerful and smiling, instead of solemn, was as great as any other miracle. "I thought pious 'uns was al'ays sober," she said to Serena Payne. The children sat on chairs and looked at her, listened to her, fascinated. She was as much of a spectacle and amazement to them as though she had come from another planet. The very tones of her voice carried wonder. When she told them a fairy story, it was nothing strange — anything might happen in the place where this woman lived. Here this evening, with the water all about them, in a strange condition, leaven had been placed in four mean bits of humanity which would eventually go through a great mass of their kind, causing their eyes to open, making them curious and eager to reach up for that possibility of clean, wholesome happiness which is their birthright as well as ours.

Judge Beale had been called to his farm a few miles out of town that afternoon, and expecting

to be home to supper, had sent no word to the family. When he started back, he found the railroad that led there under water, and was obliged to take a horse to make a long detour over the ridge road. It was a lonely road, used only for hauling from the back part of the river farms, which mostly ran back here. Sometimes he would ride along for a mile or two in sight of the Ohio, running swiftly down like yellow oil in the mid-current, and smooth as a lake where it covered the meadows.

The warm mist was a yellow haze obscuring the setting sun, and it covered the familiar land with mystery. Roger Beale walked his horse along here, and let Nature have her way with him. He gave himself up to the influences, and the strangeness outside harmonised with the flood of new thought within, which was washing away old prejudices, covering up and changing the familiar landmarks of his mind.

It had always been a characteristic of Roger Beale that he moved ahead with his time. He did not rush into extravagance, but with keen judicial mind he had looked on from the outside. For long years he had seen the gradual coming of skepticism in religious things, until it had reached the very masses of the people. He had gauged it by the spread of popular education. He had listened to smug sermons preached by

men who claimed to have apostolic rights, men who were telling him what to do with his immortal soul, when he knew that, take nine out of ten of them out of the pulpit and put them on the level ground, their opinions upon even everyday subjects were mere parroted theories upon life. And looking back into history he had seen that this was one of the marks of a civilisation's decay. When the educated, the ruling classes, lost their spirituality, they lost their life. The dominating spirit of an advancing civilisation was always something above the dust; when that died, the body politic was a mass of corruption. Materiality was death. When the heathen ruled a vigorous nation, it was through a striving for some help from beyond the dull earth in which they lived. They acknowledged Divinity, and worshipped it in some form. In his time, as it had once been with the Greeks and Romans and, before them, the Egyptians, he had seen the Spirit bruised, mocked, and crucified. The god lost the Spirit, and became merely a wooden thing to those who had made that form their symbol. In these times, like the rest of his generation, he had seen the symbols become meaningless, even for most of those who went through the forms of worship. The God of the Christians was stiffening into an idol. Words lost their meaning, and reality was dying out of the form of the world's faith. Like

thousands of other thoughtful men, Roger Beale in his serious years had looked upon Christianity as an outsider. "If it is real," he said, "it will live." And he had seen it dying. Not in numbers perhaps. Christianity has long been looked upon as a good religion, politically speaking, as it is interpreted by its present priesthood. Japan seriously considered accepting it as a national religion upon that account, and almost any conservative, whatever his own private opinions may be, would rejoice to see it held by the "lower classes."

Like most of his class, he had come at last to the place where he pitied himself, along with the rest of mankind, because the question seemed unsolvable by the senses that were needed for our daily living. But lately, unconsciously, against his volition even, he was beginning to ask, "Are our five senses all? Have we not been the blind, leading the blind, simply because we would not lift up our eyes and see?"

Judge Beale drew in his breath sharply, and started his horse into a canter.

"I wonder," he said, with humourous appreciation of his changing views, "if I am entertaining an angel unawares."

The sun was long down when he reached the town. He rode into the alley that led to his stables. He heard a scramble in the darkness

there, and called out to his stable-boy to strike a match. Jack's voice answered him, almost breathless.

"Ben's gone."

"What is it?" Judge Beale said, quickly. He put his hand into his own pocket and found his match-case. By the light of the splinter of wood he saw Jack, pale, standing there with the shot-gun which he kept in the carriage-house because his mother would not allow it in the house, held in his hands. The boy was as pale as death.

"What is it?" his father asked again. He put out the match, took the chimney from the wall lamp, and lighted it with another which he deliberately struck.

"We mustn't wait," the boy said, excitedly. "I've got the gun; let me take the horse." His father put his hand on his shoulder, and held the trembling boy.

"It's — Lily," Jack gasped. And then he burst into tears of rage and fear. "You mustn't wait. Mamma doesn't know, except that Lily went down on the river to see a baby with small-pox. But those *damned*" — the oath came out with a tearing sob — "jays say they are going to burn the house where Lily is. I'll kill *some* of them."

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“Come, show me where it is. The horse isn’t tired.” Judge Beale drew his son up behind him on the strong farm horse, and went heavily down the dark street.

CHAPTER XXXV.

DOWN the river street the mob came slowly, after the fashion of mobs not surely following one dominating leader. It moved along in a mass, like bees awaiting the pleasure of a queen.

Boys had found the storage place of the gasoline torches used in political parades, and, wild with excitement, fringed the congregation with their smoke and flare. The crowd, moving slowly, stopping at saloons, arguing with anybody who chose to question them, drinking in an effort to drive themselves to the deed that fascinated while it repelled them, took up the whole street.

Here and there in the mass were girls and women, hungry for something to happen, some new movement in this day of change, to draw a strange note from their tightened nerves.

The unusual conditions had whetted their appetite for drama, and they wanted it to go up to a startling climax.

“Aw — you-all won’t do nothin’,” one of

them said, contemptuously, to a man beside her. "You're afeard o' what'll be done to you, an' when you git over that, you're afeard o' smallpox. You won't do nothin'."

"You see if we don't. We're goin' to set that house afire an' let th' smallpox git out o' this town. Them immoral places ought to be cleaned up anyways." He was not very sober, but he wagged his head seriously, with an air of great virtue.

"That's right! Set th' place afire. Burn 'em out. We don't want no witches in this town," ran through the crowd. Growing larger every moment it went on down the street, wavering, growing, incoherent.

Near the front there was a sudden commotion, and a bushy-haired man was lifted up on a square street cornerstone to speak.

Judge Beale coming down the side street on the farm horse could see by the light of the gasoline torches that it was Clay, in a state of great excitement.

"I want to say," he shouted, "that you ought to go home. I want you to remember that my advice to you is to go home. I cannot blame you for being outraged, that while you are away from your homes, crowded together as you are in refuges, you should be made to fear smallpox, the most terrible of all diseases; fear that your

wives and children, as precious to you as the wives and children of the wealthy, who can afford to live in safety on the high hills, shall be not only in danger of drowning, but shall be exposed to loathsome disease. I cannot blame you that your strong, manly hearts are hot against the woman who would spread this disease among your innocent children, and then would drive away the doctors who would come to save them — taking the ill and suffering to a house of ill-repute, concealing disease, *murdering*, I may say, by allowing it headway." There were murmurs all through the crowd.

"But now," Clay went on, "the mischief is done. The health officers will take this matter in hand. And while they may not punish the daughter of a prominent citizen as they might punish one of you who so wronged you, yet you must disperse and let the law do what it will."

"Well, we won't," the man beside the girl yelled. "Come on, boys. We're going to burn out the smallpox."

Judge Beale rode into the crowd, and tried to speak, but they rushed past him, neither knowing nor caring who he was. The man who had called out snatched a gasoline torch from the hand of a boy, and ran ahead, shouting.

Judge Beale slipped from the horse, and gave the bridle-reins into Jack's hands.

"Stay here."

"No, sir," the boy answered, jerking the horse's head around, "I am going down there." And before his father could speak again he had galloped heavily after the shouting mob.

Judge Beale, brought up in the town, knowing every foot of it, and familiar with this old part before it came to such base uses, went rapidly down an old alleyway, pushed aside a rotting gate, and found himself in the narrow old garden of the Coxe estate. In the days when Aaron Burr visited Stevensburg on his way to found a new empire in the Southwest, he had led Mrs. Blennerhassett through the box alleys of the old Coxe garden. It was owned by some heirs in New York who hardly knew of its existence, but Judge Beale, who had played as a boy along the old brick wall that bordered its river side, knew that it ran down to the edge of the wharf, and that it was above the water. He could walk along the wall's broad top until he came to Serena Payne's house at the back, where the ground dipped. It would be a short jump for an athletic man to make his way to the roof of Serena Payne's back porch from the wall. When he was beside his daughter, he would defy any mob to touch her. The floor of the back porch of Serena Payne's house was under water now, but that was all the better. The mob would not come this way.

He could enter the house and face it. He scrambled through the bushes. There had been a rose arbour here once, but it had fallen over, and the briars had made a tangle which he found it hard to get over in the darkness. He reached the wall after awhile, hurrying, hurrying, scratched, and panting a little. He must get there, before the mob could get in. He could hear them yonder in the street now, see the flare of the gasoline torches as they bobbed this way and that in the hands of the excited boys. It was all part of a nightmare,—the rushing water, the wet, box-choked, dark garden, and over there his Lily, his pretty, dainty, gentle little girl, at the mercy of a mob of half-drunken, merciless men. He made a rush to the wall, scrambled to the top, and ran along. The watery moon showing through the heavy misty clouds showed him that bricks had fallen from the old wall, and here and there were the remains of stone urns which he must avoid. He was almost there. He could hear the mob yelling in the front of the house now, he could see some of the faces around the corner of the house. He measured the jump he must make to the top of the porch. While he stood for one second there at the end of the wall, he saw one man fight his way through the crowded street, and leaving the high ground, splash into the

water, and come down the sloping yard of Serena Payne's house toward the back door.

Judge Beale, the next instant, thought he had jumped for the porch roof and missed. He felt himself going, crashing with a terrible impetus, against the house. He knew that he was in the water, he was fighting for his life in the water, and there was some big, dark, terrible thing that had struck him once, and that would strike him again. A sickening pain seemed to crush in his chest, he laboured for breath — and then — the end of the world came. A great wave of water, rushing down the river, had borne an uprooted tree over the brick wall, and swept the man away, as though he had been a grain of sand.

Richards, holding to one of the posts of the frail back veranda of Serena Payne's house, the water washing in this new rush up to his very shoulders, felt the inert body of a man swept against him in the darkness, and put out his strong arm and held him. Once he was tempted to let him go. The body was motionless in his grasp — killed doubtless. And from the sound of the cries of those monsters out there in the street, the woman he loved, up-stairs in that house, was needing him. But there are some things a man like Richards must do, some things that his nature demands of him imperatively, and one

of these is the performance of the duty that is thrust upon him.

If the mob were shown this dead man, might it not divert them? The wave had gone on in its force, leaving the water higher but quiet again here in this sheltered spot behind the house. Richards took a good hold of the body, and climbed up the slope with it, and on to the dry ground, then staggering under it, dragging it, he made his way into the street. He could not leave it on the sloping yard for a new wave to wash away.

"Help here!" he called, loudly. But the mob was looking up, and as he looked with it, it broke, with the temper of a wilful, cruel, but easily diverted child which is the temper of all mobs, into a murmur of wonder. Richards, dripping, haggard, the wet body hanging from his arms, looked up too. Just above his head, on the roof of the tiny portico which covered the front door of Serena Payne's house, stood Lily Beale, her fair head thrown back. She had wrapped a blue cloak about her, and in her arms, laughing, striking out its arms at the flaring torches, was a baby.

A group of Catholics would have fallen on their knees, thinking they had seen the Holy Mother herself appear in the midst of the waters, but these Americans, brought up in that lack

of any religion which is the pitiful common lot of their class to-day, saw no sweet symbol.

"Where is the kid with th' smallpox?" a boy yelled.

"There is none," Lily's voice answered. Her voice trembled a little, but it held a note of triumph. "Here is the baby. He has no smallpox. There is none here."

"Aw — what was old Clay givin' us?" a voice asked.

"She's takin' care of a kid," another one said.

"Three cheers for the lady," a man shouted, who felt that he must have an occasion of some sort. And coming to burn, they threw off their hats and swung them around their heads in the wild American hurrahs. The baby laughed back over Lily's shoulder, as she went through the window into the room. Serena Payne took the child from her arms. "As if they could hurt *you!*" she said, fiercely.

In the street a boy on a horse had been held, expostulating, crying with rage, threatening, trying to ride his way through the mob. The momentary diversion had brought him closer, and a turn of a torch had thrown Richards and his burden into view.

Jack flung himself with a cry upon the body, and then Richards looked down to see that he

held Judge Beale, just as the crowd broke into its cheer.

Richards lowered his burden on to the ground.

"It's papa," Jack said, breathlessly. "What have they done to papa?" His cry brought the men near by around them.

Richards knelt on the ground, and went rapidly over the limp form. "We must take him somewhere. He isn't drowned. His chest is hurt."

"Is he —?" the boy choked on the question.

"Not yet," the doctor answered.

"We can take him right in here," one man said.

"No," Jack said, "not there. I am going for my mother, and my mother would never come in there."

"We'll carry him over there to th' Baptis' Church. Run along, an' git yer ma. We'll carry him up there." And the men Roger Beale had come down to fight, the men whose inflamed passions would have sent his daughter to a frightful death, took him up tenderly, and bore his broken body the two or three blocks to the lighted church.

The crowd, with a new interest, turned to follow. One of them saw the white, quiet face, and called out, "It's Judge Beale! Why — thet's his girl in there. You must git her. They're a-takin' her pa to th' Baptis' Church. I'll

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git her." Some of them went back, but they were stopped by a figure they all knew, who stood with upraised arm, his awkward frock coat falling limply around his ungainly legs, his hat in his hand.

"No," he thundered, in his pulpit voice. "It is not right to deprive that man of his one chance of life. Let this woman remain here. If her father dies it is a just punishment for her blasphemies, given by the very hand of God." Mr. Batton felt like John the Baptist rebuking sin. "Let her not torment his last hours by her insanity."

"But, oh — say, she ought to know." They were tender-hearted now, sentimentally so. They no longer feared the smallpox, and nobody was exciting them to riot.

"It is part of her punishment that she is not fit to know," and to the depths of his heart he believed what he said.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE doctor, the physician, was uppermost in Richards now. He had despatched a note to one of the doctors near by for bandages, restoratives, and by the time the church was reached, the telephone had told the story all over the town, and a group of doctors were there. The crowd had been pushed back, and Judge Beale was taken into Mrs. Batton's neat bedroom, where she saw his wet clothing crush her starched sham sheet with a sorrow she tried to repress. The clothes were cut from the inert body, Richards working like a half-dozen men. Outside gathered the men from up-town, the friends of the Beales, the men before whom the mob drew back abashed, hearing the rumour that was passed from lip to lip that Judge Beale had been murdered by some of them and thrown into the water. With the guilty remembrance of what they had intended to do, they slunk back to the saloons. In the church, the women called to each other excitedly, and the children cried. Half-dressed, they arose and crowded about the parson-

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age door, keen for the drama that was going on inside. It was through this crowd that Mrs. Beale came with Geraldine and Jack. Mr. Lessing, full of bustle and importance, his smug, fat face putting on its sacerdotal expression, following closely after.

Jack, all the manliness of the boy coming to the surface, held to his mother's arm. His soft young forehead was lined, and the set lips of Mrs. Beale were reproduced in her son's face. Jerry, drawing long, half-sobbing breaths, trembling through all her tall, nervous girl's body, came closely after.

The little bedroom seemed to be filled with the sound of the breathing of the hurt man. All but Doctor Richards and Mr. Shepperson drew away from the bed when Mrs. Beale and her children entered. Richards, his wet shirt outlining his shoulders, his arms bare, his face tense, worked over the poor crushed body, trying to bring back consciousness, trying to hold the life as it slipped away.

Mr. Shepperson, standing by the bed, looked at his old friend's wife with agony as she turned toward him. "Will he live?" the tense mouth asked.

Mr. Lessing came forward and put his hand on her arm. "The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away," he said, solemnly.

"Where is his daughter, that she is not here to see what she has done?" The words came through Mrs. Beale's white, frozen lips.

Jerry gave a hysterical cry, and put her head down on the rail at the foot of the bed. Not only her father, but her mother had gone into an unreal world.

Richards turned as if he had been stung. He had expected Lily there with her mother. Unacknowledged to himself, he had worked until Lily should come. He was keeping the life in that terribly gasping, bruised body, until Lily should come. That was the cry of his subconsciousness: "Until Lily can come!" And now Lily was not here. He turned his face toward them, hard and grim with its tense muscles, his eyes burning under the lowered brows.

"Bring her," he said. "*Go for her*, Jack, go for your sister." His low voice held authority. Jack let his mother's arm fall, and sped through the door. As he went, he met his aunt Harriet Glover with her husband and Lucille coming in, and brushed by their questions.

Mrs. Glover was trembling with a grief which was half anger. Her brother had been a weak man, she had said and thought, for his tolerance of Lily's vagaries. She had said in these last weeks that if Lily were her child, she should be shut up on bread and water. But he was her only

brother, her pride, the head of her family, and he was dying a martyr to what she honestly believed to be Lily's folly. She was gently taken in hand by Mr. Lessing.

"Where is Lily?" Lucille asked.

"I do not know. I think Jack has gone for her," Mr. Lessing whispered.

"I think it just as well she should not be here," Mrs. Glover said, firmly, aloud. "She has done enough mischief." Her face worked. She wanted to break out into a tirade of wrath, she wanted to shout out that Lily had caused her father's death. She wanted to hurt Lily's mother because Lily was not there to hurt. It seemed to her distorted vision in her anger and grief that her brother's wife and children were aliens — no relations. It would have astonished her to have known that she was thinking that if Roger, her young, handsome brother Roger, had never married this woman, he would never have been hurt, nothing unpleasant would ever have happened. The habit of years, her own good taste would not allow her to say any more, but the wish to do so surged through her. Lucille, gentle, moved up to Richards's side.

The doctors, grave of face, had drawn together about the door. They were shaking their heads in sorrowful negative to Mr. Glover's questions.

"Is there any hope at all?" Lucille asked.

Richards hardly knew who she was as he answered her. The man under his hands was as dear to him as his own flesh and blood — dearer if it could be, because he was of the flesh and blood of the woman who had come to have his very soul's worship.

"There is no hope," he said, firmly, "unless Lily brings it."

"Will she arouse him?"

"She can cure him," Richards said. "She can work miracles. I have seen her."

"Do you — you wouldn't let her try" — Lucille could not help it. Her astonishment had the question out — "*Christian Science?*"

"I shall let her try anything she brings. Only a miracle can save him. I have seen her work a miracle."

Mrs. Beale had stood by the bedside, stony, the expression of her face unchanged. Jerry had lifted her head and had thrown herself weeping against the mother's shoulder that had been the tender pillow of every grief she had ever known in her life, and for the first time in her life she was repulsed.

"I think," Mrs. Beale said, "that Doctor Richards is incapable of caring for my husband. Doctor Marsh, will you take him in charge?"

Richards cast a bewildered look upon her, while Doctor Marsh, the old doctor who had brought

the Beale children into the world, who had given his practice over into the young, strong hands of Richards, hesitated.

"I wish my husband's death to be — to be —" She could say no more. The very weight of her woe broke her down. She fell on her knees against the bed, and buried her face in the bed-clothes.

"Roger, Roger," she cried, "I cannot forgive our child! I cannot! I cannot!"

There was stillness in the room for a moment — except for the gasps of the labouring lungs of the man on the bed. The men held their heads down as they hold them when they hear the clods rattle on a coffin lid.

Outside there was a shrill clamour, a murmur as though dozens were trying to speak together in a whisper.

"She's comin'!" "There she is!" "Did she knock him in the water?" "They say she didn't want to come." "You'd better git away, she may have smallpox sure enough." This last made a lane through the crowd for Jack and Lily. The half-clad women, cruel in their brutal curiosity to see "how she would take it," as their vernacular has it, pushed each other, and then tried to crowd up on the steps of the parsonage veranda after her.

White of the face, serene of mien, Lily went

through them all, holding fast to Jack's shoulder, then the door opened and shut her in.

She stopped to speak to no one, but went to the bed where her father was lying, and stood there looking down upon him. In that moment of the clamour outside, the blood had rushed to Mrs. Glover's head, and she had felt that she must speak. Somebody should tell Lily Beale that this havoc was of her making, and she would not shirk the task. But with that young girl there entered into the room something which bound them all as with a spell. To each one there came the thought that here was the great change. The silence thrilled them as those are thrilled who hear the tolling of the bell for a passing spirit.

It was too solemn a moment for each of them. The men stood with bowed heads, the women with their faces in their hands. The horrible, hoarse respirations from the bed grew fainter one by one, until they were heard no more.

A moment longer Lily stood, and then she put her arm around her mother's waist to lift her.

"Come, dear," she said, softly. Mrs. Beale broke into terrible sobs.

"He is dead! He is dead!" she cried.

"Sh-sh," Doctor Richards said, lifting her hastily. "He is asleep. Hush. You will awaken him."

CHAPTER XXXVII.

ONE evening in the late May of that year, Judge Beale and his wife walked the long veranda at Old Point Comfort, where they had come for his full convalescence.

"You were shocked, and your lungs were a little bruised, but you would have recovered anyway," Mrs. Beale said. "Doctor Marsh told me so."

Judge Beale walked up and down once before he spoke.

"That is not all of it," he said.

"And as for Lily," his wife went on, "there isn't one thing that she has done — if she has done anything — that is not to be explained by understanding the common facts. Of course that horrible house-boat child never had anything the matter with it but dirt and neglect. When its face was washed it was cured. As for Serena Payne, thousands of women like her reform. It has all been intangible."

She drew a sigh which was half relief, and added: "Probably by the time she and her hus-

band return from Europe she will be ready to settle down into the sort of woman I always thought she would make. Marriage generally cures fads in a girl."

"Mary," her husband said, "the truth is the truth. It is the thing that *is*. What matter, except to us, whether we accept it, or deny it? We cannot change it, except for ourselves. If we are not borne along by its current, we are out of the stream of life. We get into the eddies and die there. We commit spiritual and mental suicide. Truth is *Life*."

"I suppose you understand what you mean," Mrs. Beale said. She walked slowly along, looking over the bay bright under the moon, and then she said, in her usual brisk way:

"I am extremely thankful that the next daughter I bring out is in no danger of listening to nonsense."

THE END.

